

## George Washington Papers, Series 3, Subseries 3A, Varick Transcripts, Letterbook 3

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Wilmington, September 1, 1777.

Sir: The latest and most material intelligence I have obtained respecting the Enemy, you will find in the inclosed papers, which I do myself the Honor of transmitting to you.

How far the Enemy have it in view to extend themselves in a Line from Bay to Bay, I cannot determine; But the Idea has taken place with many, and it is said to be founded on their hints to some persons, who from accident in some instances and perhaps choice in others have had a more familiar intercourse with them. I cannot suppose they have any such design, or if they have, that it can be more than temporary, for procuring Supplies of Provisions.

Genl. Howe's declaration<sup>25</sup> is agreeable to his constant usage, and is what we might reasonably expect. The only difference is, the present Exhibition is stiled a Declaration. It is another effort to, seduce the people to give up their rights and to encourage our soldiery to desert. The facts contained in the Deposition of Francis Alexander,<sup>26</sup> which you have also inclosed, seem to be opposed to that regularity and good discipline, which are promised by the Declaration.

Yesterday there was some skirmishing between One of our advanced parties and One of the Enemy's, in which they

25. Howe's declaration was issued August 27 at the Head of Elk. He announced that the strictest orders had been given and that the severest punishment would be inflicted on any soldier who should plunder property or molest the inhabitants. Security and protection

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was extended to all who should remain peaceably at their usual places of abode; he promised pardon to those who had taken an active part in the rebellion, provided they should voluntarily return to their allegiance and surrender themselves to any detachment of the King's forces within a specified time.

26. Francis Alexander's deposition swore to witnessing an act of British rapine. It is filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

were obliged to retreat, with the loss of an Officer and three Men killed, according to report. We had one private wounded.

I have received no particular Accounts respecting the Maryland Eastern Shore Militia. From the best information I have, a Great many are well disposed to turn out, but are prevented giving their aid, thro' the want of Arms. Apprehending that the Militia there would stand in need of an Officer to arrange them, I wrote to Genl. Cadwalader requesting his good offices, which, I am told have, been exerted. Colo Gist is now gone down and I expect will move on as soon as possible, with such as are armed, towards the Enemy. Genl Smallwood is gone to take the Command of those on the Western Shore, of which, I hear, many are collecting, but I have no authentic advices on the Subject. I have the Honor etc.

P S Will it not be advisable to order Colo. Richardson's Regiment, from their present Station to march and Join the Eastern Shore Militia?27

27. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Wilmington, September 1, 1777.

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Sir: At half after Twelve O'Clock, I was honored with Yours of this Morning, with Its several Inclosures. I shall make inquiry, respecting the Workmen in the Militia and will order all to be detached, that can be spared.

The Intelligence from the Northward is very interesting, and I hope will be succeeded by other fortunate Events. I am sorry General Arnold did not arrive sooner; If he had, it is probable the Enemy would have suffered considerably in their retreat,<sup>23</sup> I flatter myself, that we shall have nothing more to apprehend in that Quarter this Campaign, and that the disgrace and disappointment they have met with, will produce a favourable change in the dispositions of the Indians. I am etc.

P.S. You will be pleased to send the letter for Colo. Hughes by the Eastern post tomorrow.<sup>24</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Wilmington, 8 O'Clock P.M., September 3, 1777.

Sir: I this minute returned to Head Quarters, where

23. On the approach of Arnold's force the British and Indians besieging Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler), N.Y., fled.

24. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

I found your favor of this date with the Resolves respecting Genl. Sullivan and Colo Richardson's Battalion.

I had conversed with General Sullivan upon the Subject and observed to him, that it was necessary an inquiry should be had relative to the Affair of Staten Island, as his conduct was censured and much dissatisfaction prevailed. He was sensible of the propriety of the measure and expressed a desire that it should take place, provided he could have

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the benefit of Genl Smallwoods Testimony, who was on the expedition. [Unfortunately] That Gentleman happens, at this time, to be in Maryland which must necessarily delay the inquiry, unless some mode can be agreed upon for obtaining his Sentiments upon the matter.<sup>57</sup>

This morning the Enemy came out with considerable force and three pieces of Artillery, against our Light advanced Corps, and after some pretty smart skirmishing obliged them to retreat, being far inferior to them in number and without Cannon. The loss on either side is not yet ascertain'd. Ours, tho' not exactly known is not very considerable; Their's, we have reason to believe, was much greater, as some of our parties composed of expert Marksmen, had opportunities of giving them several close, well directed Fires, more particularly in one instance, when a body of Riflemen formed a kind of Ambuscade. They advanced about two Miles this side of Iron Hill, and then withdrew to that place, leaving

<sup>57</sup>. Sullivan's expedition against Staten Island had miscarried, and rumors had circulated to his disadvantage. Congress directed Washington to appoint a court of inquiry, which acquitted Sullivan with honor. His letter to Washington, dated Aug. 24, 1777, giving an account of the expedition, is in the *Washington Papers*.

a Picket at Couch's Mill about a Mile in front. Our parties now lie at White Clay Creek, except the advanced Pickets, which are at Christiana Bridge.

On Monday a large Detachment of the Enemy landed at Cecil Court House and this Morning I had advice of their having advanced on the New Castle Road, as far as Carson's Tavern. Parties of Horse were sent out to reconnoitre them, which went Three Miles beyond the Red Lion, but could neither see nor hear of them, Whence I conjecture, they filed off by a Road to their left and fell in with their Main body. The design of the Movement this Morning, seems to have been to disperse our Light Troops, which had been troublesome to them and to gain possession of Iron Hill, to establish a post most probably for covering their Retreat in case of accidents. I have the honor etc.<sup>58</sup>

**To THE COMMITTEE OF INTELLIGENCE IN CONGRESS**

Head Qurs., Wilmington, September 3, 1777.

Gentlemen: I have the honor of yours of yesterday, with a number of hand Bills<sup>59</sup> giving an Account of our Successes to the Northward. They shall be distributed among the Soldiery, and I doubt not but they will answer the good end which is

58. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The word in brackets is in the draft and not in the letter sent.

59. The handbills were those issued by Congress (August 22), which reproduced General Schuyler's letter of August 18 announcing the victory at Bennington, Vt. In it Schuyler expressed the hope that Congress would soon hear that Arnold had succeeded in relieving Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler), N. Y.

intended by them. Every piece of good News, circulated in this manner thro' the Camp, will certainly inspirit the Troops. I refer you to my Letter to Congress for the Transactions of this day and have the honor etc.

P.S. the raising the Seige of Fort Schuyler was before published in Genl Orders, but having the matter in full is a further gratification.<sup>60</sup>

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Qurs., Wilmington, September 5, 1777.

Sir: Since I did myself the honor of writing to you the Night before last, the Enemy have remained intirely quiet. A person who came express from General Rodney,<sup>71</sup> informs me, that the Enemy's Shipping fell down from Cecil Court House on Tuesday last, but how low he does not know. I have desired Genl Rodney to enquire into this matter and if it be true, to send persons along the Bay Shore to see where they lay. Genl Maxwell who is just

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come up from the Lines, confirms the account of the Shipping having fallen down Elk; but it is thought, with an intent of going up the other Arm of the Bay, for the convenience of Watering near the Mouth of Susquehannah. I have the honor etc.

P.S. We have not been able to ascertain the Enemy's loss in the

60. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

71. Brig. Gen. Caesar Rodney, of the Delaware Militia.

late Action<sup>72</sup> by any other way, than by a Woman that came from their Camp yesterday, she says she saw Nine Waggon loads of Wounded. I think this probable because we had about forty killed and wounded, and as our Men were thinly posted they must have done more damage upon a close Body, than they received.<sup>73</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

New Port, September 7, 1777.

Sir: His Excellency being out reconnoitring and busily engaged in the Affairs of the Army, I have the honor to acknowledge his receipt of your Letter of the 6th with the Resolutions inclosed, which came to hand yesterday Afternoon.

In respect to the Militia requested of Jersey, His Excellency is doubtfull whether they can be obtained; For Governor Livingston, by a late Letter, informed him, that he had no expectation, that more than Three Hundred of the Thousand called for to garrison the posts in the Highlands, would march, notwithstanding he had Issued Orders for that purpose; And, that three Weeks would probably elapse, before that Number went. If the requisition can be complied with, he has no doubt of Genl. Dickenson's exertions and is satisfied of the propriety of appointing him to the Command.

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72. The skirmish at Iron Hill, Del. (See Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Sept. 3, 1777, *ante*.)

73. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

This, he imagines, would have followed of course, as he is Major General of all the Militia in the State, and has given ample testimony as well of his capacity, as of his firmness and bravery.

By deserters and other intelligence, His Excellcy. was informed last night, that the Enemy's whole force left Elk yesterday, and advanced on the Road towards Christiana. The Deserters added, that they had disincumbered themselves of all their Tents and Baggage and had them back and reimbark'd them. All their Ships, except two or three, which are Ships of War are said to have fallen down the Bay below the Mouth of Sassafras. We have had no information to day, of any further movement and I beleive their Main Body lies about Iron Hill. I have the honor etc.

P.S. The deserters said, they had destroyed a good deal of the Corn &c. they found in Store.<sup>87</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

6 Miles from Wilmington, September 9, 1777.

Sir: The Enemy advanced Yesterday, with a seeming

87. This letter is signed "Robt. H. Harrison," and the text is in his handwriting.

intention of attacking us at our post near New port. We waited for them the whole day, but in the Evening they halted at a Place called Mill Town about two Miles from us. Upon reconnoitring their Situation, it appeared probable, that they only meant to amuse us

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in front, while their real intent was to march by our Right and by suddenly passing the Brandywine and gaining the heights on the North side of that River, get between us and Philadelphia and cut us off from that City. To prevent this it was judged expedient to change our position immediately, the Army accordingly marched at two O'Clock this Morning and will take post this Evening on the High Grounds near Chad's Ford. We have heard nothing circumstantial of the Enemy this day; when I do, I shall immediately transmit you an account. I have &ca.89

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Chads Ford, September 10, 1777.

Sir: Yesterday Evening I received the honor of your Letter of the 9th with its Several Inclosures. I have written to Genl Putnam to detach the Fifteen Hundred Men mentioned by Congress and inclosed my Letter upon the subject, which you will

89. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

be pleased to forward to him by the earliest opportunity.

In respect to the Subject of Monsr. Du Coudray's Letter, I would beg leave to observe, however eligible the Measure might otherwise be, which he recommends, An attempt to carry it into execution at this time would answer no valuable purpose, as the Work in all probability could not be more than marked out, when it would be wanted. I would also add, that I do not conceive any great advantages would be derived from it, supposing it could be completed, as we are certain the Enemy will never attack Lines which they can avoid. If they were obliged to approach Philadelphia, by a particular route, in such case no exertions should be spared to erect Works, and the adoption of the plan would be highly expedient.



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The Enemy are now lying near Kenet's Square and in a tolerably compact body. They have parties advanced on the Lancaster Road, and on those leading over this Ford and to Wilmington. Manoeuvring appears to be their Plan; I hope notwithstanding, that we shall be able to find out their real intended route, and to defeat their purposes.

By Light Horsemen this instant come in, the Enemy are in motion and appear to be advancing towards us. His Excellency is giving the necessary orders and getting the Troops under Arms, which prevents him signing this himself, as was intended at first. I have the honor &ca.<sup>93</sup>

1. Oclock.

It is said the Enemy have halted.

93. This letter is signed by Harrison, and the postscript, added by him, is in the letter sent, but not in the draft.

On September 10 Harrison wrote again to Congress that Washington was out with the army; that the British had halted about a mile below Welch's Tavern, "Some interesting event may take place tomorrow, as they are within a convenient distance to attack, they have any such intention."

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Qrs., Chad's Ford, September 10, 1777.

Sir: I am favored with yours of the 5th and 6th Inst. That of the 5th, incloses Copy of a Letter from an Officer Commanding a Regt., to a Member of Congress, complaining of particular Slight of his Regt. by the Commissary, as there is no name to the Letter it is impossible for me to inquire into the matter. I never before knew, that there was any partiality shewn to the other Officers, in preference to those of the Virginia Line, in the

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mode of serving out Provisions, and if the matter can be proved, the Commissary guilty of such partiality ought certainly to suffer. Congress are about fixing a mode of Serving out provisions to a certain number of Messes, to the Officers in each Regiment, and I hope that will prove more Satisfactory. The Article of Bacon is extra, and is provided by the Commissary at an advanced price for the Convenience and Comfort of all the Officers and I should be sorry to think, that the General Officers should Monopolize it. I am certain they neither wish or mean it, and if the Commissaries say they have any Orders to deliver it to them only, they say what is not true, [if they mean that such orders have gone from me]. Upon the whole, the charges exhibited in the letter alluded to, are rather general ones, and all that I can do is to give the Commissary of Issues a hint, that partiality is complained of and advise him to avoid any such practice.

I cannot at present answer the Question proposed by Mr. White<sup>94</sup> the deputy Commissary of Issues, why the Rations claimed by the Soldiers, differ so widely from those established by Congress on the 4th Novr. 1775. As I have none of my papers, but those of a few days old with me. I know there have been many alterations and new regulations in the Commissary's department and I fancy, if you will have the Journals minutely examined, you will find whence the difference arises. I am &c.<sup>95</sup>

94. Charles White,

95. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The phrase in brackets was added by Washington.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Chads Ford, 5 O'Clock P.M., September 11, 1777.

Sir: When I had the Honor of addressing you this Morning,<sup>98</sup> I mentioned, that the Enemy were advancing and had began a Canonade, I would now beg leave to inform you that they have kept up a brisk fire from their Artillery ever since. Their advanced party was

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attacked by our light Troops under Genl. Maxwell, who crossed the Brandywine for that purpose, and had posted his Men on some High Grounds on each side the Road. The fire from our People was not of long duration, as the Enemy pressed on in force, but was very severe. What loss the Enemy sustained, cannot be ascertained with precision; but from our situation and the briskness of the attack, It is the general opinion, particularly of those who were engaged, that they had at least Three Hundred Men killed and wounded. Our damage is not exactly known; but from the best accounts we have been able to obtain, It does not exceed fifty in the whole. After this affair, the Enemy halted upon the Heights where they have remained ever since, except a detachment of them which filed off about 11 O'Clock from their left, and which has since passed Brandywine at Jones's Ford, between Five and Six Miles above Chads. The amount of it is not known, accounts respecting it being various, some making it Two or three thousand strong and others

98. Harrison had written a short note stating that the enemy had advanced to near the Brandywine.

more. Generals Sullivan, Stirling and Stephen with their divisions are gone in pursuit and to attack it, if they can, with any prospect of Success. There has been a Scattering loose fire between our parties on each side the Creek, since the Action in the Morning, which just now became warm, when Genl. Maxwell pushed over with his Corps, and drove them from their Ground with the loss of thirty Men left dead on the Spot, among them a Captn. of the 49th, and a number of Intrenching Tools with which they were throwing up a Battery.

At half after four O'Clock, the Enemy attacked Genl Sullivan at the Ford next above this and the Action has been very violent ever since. It still continues. A very severe Cannonade has began here too and I suppose we shall have a very hot Evening. I hope it will be a happy one. I have the honor etc.<sup>99</sup>

## To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

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At Midnight, Chester, September 11, 1777.

Sir: I am sorry to inform you, that in this day's engagement, we have been obliged to leave the enemy masters of the

99. This letter is signed by Harrison and is indorsed as read in Congress September 12. Under Harrison's signature is written: "Published by order of Congress. Chas. Thomson. Secy."

field. Unfortunately the intelligence received of the enemy's advancing up the Brandywine, and crossing at a ford about six miles above us, was uncertain and contradictory, notwithstanding all my pains to get the best. This prevented my making a disposition, adequate to the force with which the Enemy attacked us on the right; in consequence of which the troops first engaged, were obliged to retire before they could be reinforced. In the midst of the attack on the right, that body of the Enemy which remained on the other side of Chad's Ford, crossed it, and attacked the division there under the command of General Wayne and the light troops under General Maxwell who, after a severe conflict, also retired. The Militia under the command of Major Genl. Armstrong, being posted at a ford, about two miles below Chad's, had no opportunity of engaging. But though we fought under many disadvantages, and were from the causes, above mentioned obliged to retire, yet our loss of men is not, I am persuaded, very considerable, I beleive much less than the enemy's. We have also lost about seven or eight pieces of cannon, according to the best information I can at present obtain. The baggage having been previously moved off, is all secure, saving the men's Blankets, which being at their backs, many of them doubtless are lost.

I have directed all the Troops to Assemble behind Chester, where they are now arranging for this Night. Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits; and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained. The Marquis La Fayette was wounded in the leg,

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and Genl. Woodford in the hand. Divers other Officers were wounded and some Slain, but the number of either cannot now be ascertained. I have &ca.

P.S. It has not been in my power to send you earlier intelligence; the present being the first leisure moment I have had since the action.<sup>1</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, German Town, September 13, 1777.

Sir: I have been honoured with your favor of this date. I heartily wish the Works on Delaware were compleated, but I think, and in this opinion my Officers concur, that the Service will be injured, if any part of the Continental Troops were now to be employed about them.<sup>6</sup> If we should be able to oppose Genl. Howe with Success in the Field, the works will be unnecessary. If not, and he should force us from hence, he will certainly possess himself of them. But to prevent his attempting it now, I have directed the Meadows over Province Island to be over flowed immediately, and any other Grounds that may be thought

1. Greene's *Life of Nathanael Greene* (vol. I, p. 454) relates that Washington was too fatigued to write to Congress after the battle and directed one of his aides to do it. Harrison was too "distressed," and so it fell to Pickering, the Adjutant General. "I wrote it and gave it to the General to read. He, with perfect composure, directed me to add a consolatory hope that another day would give a more fortunate result." Both the draft and the letter signed are in Pickering's writing and, in view of the importance attached to Pickering's recollections of Washington by some, it should be noted that neither draft nor letter signed show any evidence that the "consolatory hope" was an addition to the letter, while the postscript, as above, was evidently an after thought. This is sufficient to show the necessity of accepting Pickering's recollections with some caution.

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Congress had requested Washington (September 9): "to appoint a proper person at headquarters to write to the president twice a day, or oftener if necessary, advising the position and movements of the armies" The Board of War was ordered to appoint expresses to convey these letters.

6. By a resolve of September 13 Washington was "directed to give the necessary orders for completing the defences of Delaware River and to employ for that purpose such officers, engineers and troops as he shall think proper."

necessary for that purpose. The Works have been more peculiarly under the direction of Monsr. Du Coudray, and I doubt not he will pay every attention to their completion and security, that the situation of affairs will admit of. A part of the Militia under Genl. Armstrong will be posted along Schuylkill, to throw up Redoubts at the different Fords, which will be occasionally occupied, whilst I move to the other side with the Main body of the Army. This disposition appears to me most eligible, from a consideration of all circumstances and better, than if any part of our present force was to be employed at the Forts. If further Reinforcements of the Militia should come in, they perhaps may be more properly assigned to that business than any we now have.

Your Letter respecting General De Borre<sup>7</sup> just now came to hand. I shall transmit him a Copy of it and of the Resolution. There can be no Court of inquiry into his conduct, at this time; as soon as the State of the Army will admit, it will be held. I have the honor etc.<sup>8</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Qurs., near German Town, September 14, 1777.

Sir:

7. Brig. Gen. Preudhomme de Borre. He commanded a brigade in Sullivan's division at the Battle of Brandywine. "In consequence of some information Congress have received"

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Washington was directed to order a court of inquiry into Borre's conduct, and he was meanwhile recalled from the Army by a resolution of September 13. The next day Borre offered his resignation to the President and it was accepted.

8. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

I have the honor of yours of this Morning, inclosing the Copy of a Letter from General Dickinson. In consequence of the interesting information contained in it, I have written to General Putnam, directing him to send forward a second detachment of a thousand Men, in addition to the former, as you will perceive by the inclosed duplicate of my Letter to him which you will be pleased to seal and dispatch, as expeditiously as possible, lest the original should by any accident miscarry I have the honor etc.

P.S. You have also Copies of other letters, by which you will perceive the measures I am taking; and which you will be pleased in like manner to forward. On Second thought, I should be glad you would transmit the inclosures, open, to Genera Dickinson for his perusal and information and to be forwarded by him.<sup>23</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

September 15, 1777.

Sir: Your favor of yesterday with its several Inclosures,

23. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

came to hand last night. Tho' I would willingly pay every attention to the Resolutions of Congress, yet in the late instance respecting the recall of Genl Sullivan,<sup>25</sup> I must [beg leave to] defer giving any order about It, [till I hear further from that Honble. Body.] Our Situation at this time is critical and delicate, and nothing should be done to add to its embarrassments. We are now most probably on the point of another Action, and to

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derange the Army by withdrawing so many General Officers from it, may and must be attended with many disagreeable, if not ruinous, Consequences. Such a proceeding at another time, might not produce any bad effects, but How can the Army be possibly conducted with a prospect of Success, if the General Officers are taken off, in the moment of Battle? Congress may rely upon it, such a measure will not promote, but injure the service. It is not my wish to prevent or to delay a proper inquiry into Genl Sullivan's Conduct, a single instant, when the Circumstances of the Army will admit; But now they prohibit it, and, I think, the suspension in his command also. The recall of Genl. St. Clair, obliged me to part with Genl. Lincoln, whom I could but illy spare, so that the whole charge of his division is now upon Genl. Wayne, [there being no other Brigr.] in it than himself. The Maryland Troops, if Genl Sullivan is taken away, will not have one Genl. Officer, Genl Smallwood being at the Head of the Militia coming from that State and Genl. DeBorre suspended; added to this, Colo. Gist who Commands one Regiment of them, is now from it, by Order. In a word Sir, whether the charges alledged against Genl. Sullivan are true or false, or whether his conduct has been exceptionable or not,

25. September 14 Congress, in a flurry of disappointment over the Battle of Brandywine, ordered that Sullivan, to whose lack of energy the loss of the battle was ascribed, be recalled from the Army until the inquiry, previously ordered into his conduct, could be made. This was an indirect criticism of Washington for not having ordered a court of inquiry on Sullivan's conduct of the expedition against Staten Island. Thomas Burke's letter to Sullivan (Oct. 12, 1777) details the Brandywine charges. (See Burnett's *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, vol. 2, p. 519.) At Brandywine Sullivan practically duplicated his ineptitude at the Battle of Long Island and permitted the British to outflank and surprise him in precisely the same manner. A court of inquiry afterwards honorably acquitted General Sullivan.

I am satisfied, the resolution for his recall at this time, was unhappily adopted, and if carried into execution, will not fail to add new difficulties to our present distresses. And I



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am obliged to observe, in justice to my own Charactr. that I cannot be answerable for the consequences which may arise from a want of Officers to assist me.<sup>26</sup>

It gives me great pleasure to find Genl Gates is on so respectable a footing, and I hope our affairs in that Quarter in the course of a little time, will be in as prosperous a train, as we could reasonably wish.

[The main body of the Enemy (from the best Intelligence I have been able to get) lay near Dilworth Town, not far from the Field of Action where they have been busily Employed in burying their Dead, which from Accounts amounted to a very considerable Number.<sup>27</sup> We are moving up this Road to get in between the Enemy and the Swedes Ford and to prevent them from turning our right flank, which they seem to have a violent inclination<sup>28</sup> to effect,<sup>29</sup> by all their Movements.]

I would beg leave to recommend, in the most earnest manner, that some Board or Committee be appointed or some mode adopted for obtaining supplies of Blankets for the Troops. Many are now without, and the Season becoming cold, they will be injured in their Health and unfitted for Service, unless they are immediately provided with them. Our Supplies in this instance, as well as in every Article of Cloathing, can not be too great as there are frequent losses, not easily to be avoided.

26. In the draft this clause, in Washington's writing, appears thus: "to which in Justice to my own charactr. I am obliged to ansr. that I cannot be responsible for conseqs. witht. Offirs. to assist me."

27. In the draft this phrase, in Washington's writing, appears as: "near, between Birmingham Meeting House."

28. Washington wrote "propensity" in the draft.

29. The draft in Washington's writing has "do."

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I would also observe, that I think, in point of prudence and Sound policy, Every Species of Provisions, should be removed from the City, except such as will be necessary to supply the present demands of this Army. I have been told there are considerable quantities in private Hands, which should not be suffered to remain for a moment longer than they can be conveyed away. I have &ca.30

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Yellow Springs, September 17, 1777.

Sir: I have been honored with your two favors of yesterday and their inclosures; to which due attention shall be paid.

The Enemy seem now to be straining every nerve to accomplish their purpose; but I trust, whatever present success they may have, they will ere long experience a reverse of fortune. If they have four thousand Men in the Jerseys, it is probable they have something more serious in view than a mere diversion. But I am in hopes when Genl McDougall comes to unite his force with the Militia, General Dickenson will be strong enough effectually to make head against them.

Yesterday the Enemy moved past Concord by the Edgemont towards the Lancaster Road, with evident design to gain our right flank.

30. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The draft is in the writing of Harrison and Washington and, in addition to the variations noted above, that part of the draft winch is in Washington's writing is inclosed in brackets.

This obliged us to alter our position and march to this place, from whence we intend immediately to proceed to Warwick. We suffered much, from the severe weather yesterday and last night, being separated from our tents and baggage, which not only endangers the health of the Men, but has been very injurious to our Arms and ammunition. These, when

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we arrive at Warwick, we shall endeavour, as soon as possible, to put again into a proper condition; to do which and to refresh the Men are two principal motives for going there. I have the honor &ca.<sup>32</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Reading Furnace, September 18, 1777.

Sir: Your favor of the 17th I had the Honor to receive last night with Govr. Livingston's and Genl Dickenson's Letters. It is out of my power, to do more than I already have, for checking the Enemy's progress in Jersey, and I should hope, that will be the case, as soon as the Troops ordered from Peekskill, arrive to reinforce the Militia assembling under Genl. Dickenson. I observe that all the Continental Stores, which have been removed from Philadelphia were at Trenton, on the 16th, according to Genl. Dickenson's Letter.

32. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

That place, in the first instance, was fixed on thro' necessity, and conveying them there was better than to have them where they were; But I am clear in Opinion, that they should not be suffered to remain there a Moment longer than can be avoided, and I would beg leave to recommend, that the earliest and most vigorous measures should be adopted for removing them to Allen Town in North Hampton County.

From the advices received yesterday evening and last Night, It appeared that the Enemy were pushing a considerable force to the White Horse Tavern, with a view, it was supposed to fall on our right Flank. This induced us to proceed this Morning to this place, where we are cleaning our Arms with the utmost assiduity and replacing our Cartridges, which unfortunately were mostly spoiled by the heavy Rain on Tuesday. By some of our Light Horsemen, this moment come in, It is said, the Enemy are advancing on the Road towards Sweedes Ford: As soon as possible, the Troops will be put in motion, but I am doubtful, Whether that can be done before to Morrow Morning for want of Provisions,

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which has impeded our Movements very considerably, since we passed Schuylkill last. I have the Honor &c.<sup>40</sup>

40. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

September 19, 1777.

Sir: I was honored, this Morning, with your favors of the 17th and 18th with their Inclosures. I am much obliged to Congress for the late instance of their Confidence, expressed in their Resolution of the 17th, and shall be happy, if my conduct in discharging the objects they had in view, should be such, as to meet their approbation.<sup>41</sup>

I am now repassing the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford, with the Main body of the Army, which will be over in an hour or Two, tho' the water is deep and rapid.<sup>42</sup> Genl Wayne, with the Division under his Command, is on the rear of the Enemy, and will be joined to morrow or next day, I expect, by Genl Smallwood and Colo. Gist with their Corps.<sup>43</sup> As soon as the Troops have crossed the River, I shall march them, as expeditiously as possible, towards Fatland, Swedes and the other Fords, where it is most probable the Enemy will attempt to pass.

When I left Germantown with the Army, I hoped I should have had an opportunity of attacking them, either in Front or on their Flank, with a prospect of Success; But unhappily a variety of Causes concurred to prevent it. Our March, in the first place, was greatly impeded thro' want of Provisions, which delayed us so long that the Enemy were apprized of our Motions, and gained the Grounds near the White Horse Tavern,

41. The necessity of a speedy removal of Congress from Philadelphia, and the uncertainty as to the time of the next meeting, moved Congress to confer powers upon Washington which practically made him a dictator: "Resolved, That General Washington be authorized and directed to suspend all officers who shall misbehave, and to fill up all vacancies in

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the American army, under the rank of brigadiers, until the pleasure of Congress shall be communicated: to take, wherever he may be, all such provisions and other articles as may be necessary for the comfortable subsistence of the army under his command, paying or giving certificates for the same; to remove and secure for the benefit of the owners, all goods and effects, which may be serviceable to the enemy; provided, that the powers hereby vested shall be exercised only in such parts of these states as may be within the circumference of 70 miles of the head quarters of the American army, and shall continue in force for the space of 60 days, unless sooner revoked by Congress.” (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Sept. 17, 1777.)

42. “His Excellency General Washington was with the troops who passed us here to the Perkiomen. The procession lasted the whole night, and we had all kinds of visits from officers wet to the breast, who had to march in that condition the cold, damp night through, and to bear hunger and thirst at the same time. This robs them of courage and health, and instead of prayers we hear from most, the national evil, curses.”— *Muhlenberg's Diary*, Sept. 19, 1777.

43. On September 19 Wayne was at Paoli and wrote Washington that he was near the enemy, who were unaware of his position. Smallwood wrote, this same day, giving the route of his march to join Washington. With Colonel Gist's troops he was near James Milligan's tavern on the 19th.

with a part of their Army turning our right flank, whilst another part, composing the Main Body, were more advanced towards our left. We should have disappointed them in their design by getting on their left; But the Heavy rain which fell that [on Tuesday] evening and in the course of the night, totally unfitted our Guns for Service and nearly the whole of the Ammunition with which the Army had been compleated a day or two before, amounting to Forty Rounds per Man. At first I expected that the loss was by no means so considerable, and intended [only] to file off with the Troops a few Miles to replace it and clean their Arms and then to proceed on my Original plans; but upon examination, found it as I

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have mentioned, and that we had not a sufficient supply with us to furnish the Men with the necessary Complement. In this Situation it was judged necessary, that we should proceed as far as Reading Furnace for the security of the Army. Owing to these accidents, particularly the latter, matters have not been conducted as I intended and wished, and the Enemy have had an opportunity of making their advances without being attacked. I yet hope, from the present state of the River, that I shall be down in time to give them a meeting and if unfortunately they should gain Philadelphia, that it will not be without loss. I have the honor &ca.

N.B. The Main body of the Enemy afterwards moved towards the White Horse and took their Rout down the Road from thence. I should have advised you this Morning by Express of the Enemy's advance and situation, had not Colo. Hamilton informed me that he had written you on the Subject.<sup>44</sup>

44. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The text of the letter sent was kindly furnished by F.H. Sweet, of Battle Creek, Mich. The words within the brackets are in the draft, but not in the letter sent. The N. B. is not in the draft.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp near Potts Grove, September 23, 1777.

Sir: I have not had the honor of addressing you since your adjournment to Lancaster 69 and I sincerely wish that my first letter was upon a more agreeable subject. The Enemy, by a variety of perplexing Manœuvres thro' a Country from which I could not derive the least intelligence, being to a man disaffected, contrived to pass the Schuylkill last Night at the Fatland and other Fords in the Neighbourhood of it. They marched immediately towards Philadelphia and I imagine their advanced parties will be near that City to Night. They had so far got the Start before I recd. certain intelligence that any considerable Number had crossed, that I found it in vain to think of overtaking their Rear with Troops harrassed as ours had been with constant marching since the Battle of Brandywine, and

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therefore concluded, by the advice of all the General Officers to march from this place to morrow Morning towards Philadelphia, and on the way endeavour to form a junction with the Continental Troops under Genl. McDougall from Peekskill, and the Jersey Militia under General Dickinson, both of whom are I hope on this Side the Delaware.<sup>70</sup> I am also obliged to wait for Genl. Wayne and Genl. Smallwood who were left on the other Side of Schuylkill in hopes of falling upon the Enemy's Rear, but they have eluded them as well as us.

69. After Congress adjourned on September 18 “the president received a letter from Colonel Hamilton, one of General Washington's aids, which intimated the necessity of Congress removing immediately from Philadelphia; Whereupon, the members left the city, and, agreeable to the resolve of the 14 repaired to Lancaster.” On September 27 Congress convened at Lancaster and that same day “Adjourned to Yorktown, there to meet on Tuesday next, at 10 o'Clock.” (See *Journals the Continental Congress*.) At York, beyond the Susquehanna, they met on the 30th, and continued their sessions there till the British evacuated Philadelphia, June 18, 1778.

70. See the proceedings of the Council of War, Sept. 23, 1777, and Washington's letter to Lord Stirling, Sept. 25, 1777, *post*. The Continental Army did not move from Potts Grove until the 26th.

When I last recrossed the Schuylkill, it was with a firm intent of giving the Enemy Battle, wherever I should meet them and accordingly advanced as far as the Warren Tavern upon the Lancaster Road, near which place the two Armies were upon the point of coming to a general Engagement but were prevented by a most violent Flood of Rain, which continued all the day and the following Night. When it held up, we had the Mortification to find that our Ammunition, which had been compleated to Forty Rounds a Man, was intirely ruined, and in that Situation we had nothing left for it, but to find out a Strong piece of Ground which we could easily maintain till we could get the Arms put into order and a Recruit of Ammunition. Before this could be fully effected, the Enemy marched from their position

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near the White Horse Tavern down the Road leading to the Swedes Ford. I immediately crossed the Schuylkill above them and threw myself full in their Front, hoping to meet them in their passage or soon after they had passed the River. The day before Yesterday they were again in Motion and marched rapidly up the Road leading towards Reading. This induced me to beleive that they had two objects in view, one to get round the right of the Army; the other, perhaps to detach parties to Reading, where we had considerable Quantities of military Stores. To frustrate those intentions, I moved the Army up on this side the River to this place, determined to keep pace with them; but early this morning, I received intelligence that they had crossed at the Fords below.<sup>71</sup> Why I did not follow immediately I have

71. At this point the draft, which is in Tilghman's writing, has "This shew of moving up the day before being only a feint."

mentioned in the former part of my letter. But the strongest Reason against being able to make a forced March is the want of Shoes. Messrs. Carroll, Chase and Penn, who were some days with the Army, can inform Congress, in how deplorable a Situation the Troops are for want of that necessary Article, at least one thousand Men are bare looted and have performed the late Marches in that condition. I was told of a great number of Shoes in the hands of private people in Philadelphia and sent down to secure them, but I doubt the approach of the Enemy will prevent it. I have planned a method, of throwing a Garrison into Fort Mifflin; if it suceeds, and they with the Assistance of the Ships and Gallies, should keep the obstructions in the River, Genl Howe's Situation in Philadelphia will not be the most agreeable; for if his supplies can be stopped by Water, it may be easily done by land. To do both, shall be my utmost endeavour, and I am not yet without hope, that the acquisition of Philadelphia may, instead of his good fortune, prove his Ruin.

Genl St. Clair who has been constantly with the Army for some time past, can give you many pieces of information which may have escaped me, and therefore I refer you to him for many particulars.



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[If there are any Shoes and Blankets to be had in Lancaster or that part of the Country I earnestly entreat] you to have them taken up for the use of the Army. I have been informed, that there are large parcels of Shoes, in particular there.

Finding that the inclosed came from Colo Gibson, I took the liberty of opening it, as I wanted much to know what Route he was taking. I have ordered all the Virginia Militia who are tolerably armed, to come forward and join the Army; those who have no Arms are to wait at Frederick Town in Maryland, till they hear whether any can be provided for them at Lancaster. You will therefore be pleased to make enquiry what number can be procured there, and send an Express to Frederick with orders for as many men to come forward, as there are Arms. I have the honor etc.<sup>72</sup>

### **To ELBRIDGE GERRY**

September 26, 1777.

Sir: I was this Morning favored with your Letter of the 24th. When I wrote Congress, I was informed, that there were several Arms in Lancaster belonging to the Public. These, with their Accoutrements, I wished to be collected and put into the Hands of the Militia coming from Virginia. But I did not mean that any, the property of Individuals, should be taken; because I did not conceive myself authorised, nor do I at this time, to order such a Measure. I don't know how the Inhabitants would relish such an exercise of Power.

72. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. The words in brackets, in Washington's writing, were in Tilghman's draft, but unintentionally omitted by him in copying the letter for Washington's signature.

I rather think it would give great uneasiness. The Army is much distressed for Blankets and Shoes, and I wish the most vigorous exertions could be pursued to make a Collection the speediest possible where you are and in the Neighbourhood. I am satisfied, if proper

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Steps were taken, many might be procured. I have been and am doing all I can to make a Collection, but what will be obtained will be totally inadequate to the demand.<sup>82</sup>

We are now in Motion and advancing to form a junction with Genl McDougall. I expect to be joined in a day or two by Genl. Foreman with fourteen or Fifteen hundred Jersey Militia. The Main body of the Enemy are also advancing towards Philadelphia, and were below Germantown from my last advices; which also mentioned, that a Thousand Infantry, with about 100 Dragoons, had filed off towards Chesnut Hill. I fear they are pushing for Bristol, after our Stores, which I am apprehensive are not entirely removed tho' I gave orders for it, the Moment I heard they were there. I am &c.<sup>83</sup>

### To ELBRIDGE GERRY

Camp at Pennybecker's Mill, September 27, 1777.

Sir: I am favored with yours of the 25th. I yesterday

82. "Since I wrote you a few minutes ago, His Excellency has received a letter from Mr, Gerry at Lancaster, in which he says that 300 pairs of Shoes had been sent off from thence to you; but as you have already obtained 200 pair from Reading', the General desires that when those arrive from Lancaster, they may be sent to the Clothier Genl: to be distributed among the Troops."— *Tench Tilghman to Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne*, Sept. 27, 1777. Tilghman's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

83. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

wrote you, that I did not think myself Authorised to seize upon any Arms the property of private Persons; but if they can be collected and the owners satisfied for them, it would be of very essential service, as great numbers of Militia would join the Army, could they be furnished with Arms. I am glad you have began the collection of Blankets and Shoes; this business cannot be carried to too great an extent, and I think, if the Measure is properly

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pursued, great Quantities of Blankets, Rugs and Coverlids, may be collected in the back Counties. The approach of the Enemy to Philadelphia, hindered the Officers I sent upon that Business from doing much; the disaffected hid their goods the moment the thing took wind and our friends had, before, parted with all they could spare. As soon as Gibson's Regiment or any of the Virginia Militia arrive at Lancaster, be pleased to send them forward without delay. I am &ca.<sup>87</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Pennebeckers Mill, September 28, 1771.

Sir: The present situation of our Affairs makes it necessary, we should exert every nerve to collect, without loss of time, all the force we can get together, to endeavour to compensate for the loss we have sustained, and prevent the enemy's reaping the advantage

<sup>87</sup>. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

they expect from their late success. I must therefore beg the favor of you, to send forward and hurry on the militia that are coming from the Southward. I would wish them to take the shortest route to the Schuylkill, so as to cross it above the mouth of Trench Creek and thence proceed to join this Army, with all possible expedition. As the militia will march in seperate detachments, I am at a loss to call upon any particular officer to hasten their progress, which induces me to request your attention to the matter. you are sensible of the exigency of the times, and how essential it is, that the reinforcements for this army, should join it as speedily as the nature of things will permit; and I doubt not you will contribute every exertion, in your power, to promoting this desirable and important end. I am etc.<sup>88</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp Pennybacker's Mill, September 29, 1777.

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Sir: I have the honor of yours of the 26th inclosing letters for Commodore Hazlewood and Capt. Alexander, which I have forwarded to them. Lt Colo Smith must have arrived at Fort Mifflin two days ago, As I heard from him at Ancocus Creek<sup>1</sup> in the Jerseys. Colo. Nichola was in the Fort with about 60 of his Regiment

88. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

1. Rancocas Creek.

of Invalids and two Companies of Artillery, of thirty each, and I advised him to withdraw what force was at Billingsport and to remove the few stores from thence to Fort Mifflin. He intended to call on Govt. Livingston for a reinforcement of Jersey Militia. Genl. Smallwood joined me yesterday with the Maryland Militia, but much reduced by desertion. I question whether they will exceed one thousand rank and file. Genl. Foreman will fall in with the Army to day with between Eight and nine hundred Militia and Continental troops from Jersey. There are but few of the latter, being only small detachments picked up on his march. I shall move the Army four or five miles lower down to day, from whence we may reconnoitre and fix upon a proper Situation, at such distance from the Enemy, as will enable us to make an attack, should we see a proper opening, or stand upon the defensive, till we obtain further reinforcements. This was the opinion of a Majority of a Council of General Officers, which I called yesterday. I Congratulate you upon the success of our Arms to the Northward and if some accident does not put them out of their present train, I think we may count upon the total ruin of Burgoyne. I have the honor etc.<sup>2</sup>

2. The draft is in the writing of Caleb Gibbs.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp, 20 Miles from Philadelphia, October 3, 1777.

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Sir: Yesterday afternoon, I had the honour to receive your Favours of the 30th Ultó. with their Inclosures. I was much obliged by the Accounts from the Northern Army, tho' in general they had reached me before, and I flatter myself, we shall soon hear, that they have been succeeded by other fortunate and interesting Events, as the Two Armies, by General Gates's Letter, were encamped near each other.

I shall pay due attention to the Resolution you refer me to, and no exertions on my part shall be wanting, to collect what Necessaries I can for the Army. This I am persuaded will be equally attended to by the Honble. Board of War, and I hope by care and industry, many Supplies may be obtained to relieve our distresses, which in the Articles of Shoes, Stockings and Blankets are extremely great.

Since my Letter of the 29th, no favourable change has taken place in our affairs. On the contrary, we have sustained an additional loss in the capture of the Delaware. She fell into the Enemy's hands in a day or two after they were in possession of the City, and in a manner not yet well understood. Some have supposed the Crew mutinied, while another report is, that she was disabled in her Rudder by a shot and drove on shore.

This misfortune takes off the success of Capt. Biddle's cruize.<sup>33</sup> I will not dwell longer on the subject; <sup>34</sup> Congress may rest assured, all the means in my power shall be employed to put our affairs in a more agreeable train and accomplish the end, they so earnestly wish. I have the honor etc.<sup>35</sup>

P.S. Inclosed is a Copy of Genl Howe's Proclamation issued the 28th Ultó.<sup>36</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp near Pennibackers Mill, October 5, 1777.

Sir: Having received intelligence, thro' Two intercepted Letters, that Genl Howe had detached a part of his force for the purpose of reducing Billingsport and the Forts on

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Delaware, I communicated the Accounts to my General Officers, who were unanimously of Opinion, that a favourable opportunity offered to make an Attack upon the Troops, which were at and near German Town. It was accordingly agreed, that it should take place Yesterday morning and the following dispositions were made. The Divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's Brigade, were to enter the Town by the way of Chesnut Hill, while Genl Armstrong, with the Pensylvania Militia

33. Capt. Nicholas Biddle, and the prizes he had taken off Charleston, S.C.

34. As soon as the British had taken possession of Philadelphia they erected three batteries near the river to protect the city against such American shipping and craft as might approach the town. On September 26, before the batteries were finished, Commodore Hazelwood, by the advice of a council of officers, ordered two frigates—the *Delaware* and *Montgomery*, each of 24 guns—the sloop *Fly*, and several galleys and gondolas to move up to Philadelphia and commence a cannonade on the town should the enemy persist in erecting fortifications. The *Delaware* anchored within 500 yards of the batteries and the other vessels took such stations as were suited to their object. At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 27th the cannonade began, but on the falling of the tide the *Delaware* grounded. In this disabled condition the guns from the batteries soon compelled her colors to be struck, and she was taken by the enemy. A schooner was likewise driven on shore, but the other frigate and small craft returned to their former station near the fort. The suspicion that the crew mutinied was never confirmed, nor was there any such hint in the British commander's dispatch describing the event.— *Sparks*.

35. In the writing of John Walker; the draft is in that of Robert Hanson Harrison.

36. A copy of Howe's proclamation of September 28 is not found in the *Papers of the Continental Congress* or the *Washington Papers*. It referred to Howe's proclamation of August 27, offering pardon and protection to inhabitants of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the eastern shore of Maryland, and promised protection to those who had taken advantage

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of that offer to date. Copies of both proclamations—that of August 27 and September 28—are in Gaine's *New York Gazette*, Nov. 10, 1777.

should fall down the Manatawny Road<sup>46</sup> by Vandeerings Mill and get upon the Enemy's left and Rear. The Divisions of Greene and Stephen, flanked by McDougal's Brigade, were to enter by taking a circuit by way of the Lime Kiln Road at the Market House and to attack their Right wing, and the Militia of Maryland and Jersey under Generals Smallwood and Foreman were to march by the old York road and fall upon the rear of their Right. Lord Stirling with Nash and Maxwell's Brigades was to form a Corps de Reserve. We marched about Seven O'Clock the preceding Evening and Genl Sullivan's advanced party, drawn from Conways Brigade, attacked their Picket at Mount Airy or Mr. Allen's House, about Sun rise the next Morning, which presently gave way, and his Main body, consisting of the Right Wing, following, soon engaged the Light Infantry and other Troops, encamped near the picket, which they forced from the Ground, leaving their Baggage.

They retreated a considerable distance, having previously thrown a party into Mr. Chew's House, who were in a situation not to be easily forced, and had it in their power, from the Windows, to give us no small annoyance, and in a great measure to obstruct our advance.<sup>47</sup>

The Attack from our left Column under Genl. Greene began about three Quarters of an Hour after that from the Right, and was for some time equally successful. But I cannot enter upon the particulars of what happened in that Quarter, as I

46. Pickering says “the old Egypt or Schuylkill road.”

47. The draft described this attack on the Chew House as follows: “They retreated as far as Mr. Chew's House, which they occupied and from the Windows did us considerable damage. during this time I waited with great anxiety to hear from Genls. Greene and Armstrong, but received no intelligence, and it was impossible to discover their movements

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or firing on account of a thick, heavy Fog which prevented our seeing more than Fifty Yards." This was afterwards stricken out.

am not yet informed of them with sufficient certainty and precision.<sup>48</sup>

The Morning was extremely foggy, which prevented our improving the advantages we gained, so well as we should otherwise have done. This circumstance, by concealing from us the true situation of the Enemy, obliged us to act with more caution and less expedition than we could have wished, and gave the Enemy time to recover from the effects of our first impression; and what was still more unfortunate, it served to keep our different parties in ignorance of each Others movements and hindering their acting in concert. It also occasioned them to mistake one another for the Enemy, which, I believe, more than any thing else, contributed to the misfortune which ensued. In the midst of the most promising appearances, when every thing gave the most flattering hopes of victory, the Troops began suddenly to retreat; and intirely left the Field, in spite of every effort that could be made to rally them.

Upon the whole it may be said the day was rather unfortunate than injurious. We sustained no material loss of Men and brought off all our Artillery, except one piece which was dismounted. The Enemy are nothing the better by the event; and our Troops, who are not in the least dispirited by it, have gained what all young Troops gain by being in Actions. We have had however several valuable Officers killed and wounded, particularly the latter, General Nash is among the wounded and his life is despaired of. As soon as it is possible to obtain a Return of our loss, I will transmit it.

48. Washington himself was with the right wing.

In justice to Genl Sullivan and the whole right wing of the Army, whose conduct I had an opportunity of observing, as they acted immediately under my eye, I have the pleasure to



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inform you, that both Officers and Men behaved with a degree of Gallantry, that did them the highest honor. I have &ca.

P.S. As I have observed, I have not received a Return of our loss, but from what I have just now learnt from Genl Greene, I fear it is more considerable than I at first apprehended in Men. The Cannon mentioned above, is said to have been brought off in a Waggon.<sup>49</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Camp near Pennibackers Mill, October 7, 1777.

Sir: Since I had the honor of addressing you on the 5th, I have obtained a Return of our loss in the Action on Saturday, by which it appears to be much more considerable, than I first apprehended, tho' I always imagined myself, that it was greater than it was generally supposed to be. The Copy of the Return inclosed<sup>69</sup> will shew the amount as it now stands, but I hope

49. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison; the draft is in that of Harrison and Alexander Hamilton.

69. This return is not found in either the *Papers of the Continental Congress* or the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

many of those who are missing will yet come in.<sup>70</sup> I fear however, there are several under that denomination, to be added to the number of the slain, as the Action was warm in every Quarter, from the information of the Officers who commanded the different Attacks. What loss the Enemy sustained, I am not able precisely to ascertain, but from a variety of corresponding Accounts, of persons who left the City since and those of a Deserter, it was very considerable. The Deserter, who is intelligent, says Genl. Agnew<sup>71</sup> was killed Sir William Erskine wounded in the head and leg, and that their general loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to near Eight Hundred. Several Reputable persons from the City,

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corroborate this, particularly with respect to General Agnew's death. Some say, upwards of Two Hundred Waggon's with wounded were carried in after the Action and before they came out, and that it was the common belief there, that the Enemy had been severely handled. It is with much chagrin and mortification, I add, that every account confirms the opinion I first entertained, that our Troops retreated at an instant when Victory was declaring herself in our favor. The tumult, disorder and even despair, which it seems had taken place in the British Army, were scarcely to be paralleled; and it is said, so strongly did the Ideas of a retreat prevail, that Chester was fixed on as their Rendezvous. I can discover no other cause, for not improving this happy Opportunity, than the extreme haziness of the weather.

My intention is to encamp the Army at some

70. See Washington's letter to John Augustine Washington, Oct. 18, 1777, *post*.

71. James Agnew. He was an aide-de-camp to the King and ranked as a brigadier general in America.

suitable place, to rest and refresh the Men, and recover them from the still remaining effects of that disorder naturally attendant upon a Retreat. We shall there wait for the Reinforcements coming on and shall then act according to circumstances. General Varnum, with the Detachment from Peekskill, amounting to about Twelve Hundred including Officers, would be last night at Coryel's Ferry. About Five Hundred Militia from Virginia and Two hundred from Maryland, together with Colo Gibson's State Regiment, consisting of 226 Effectives, have already joined the Army. Since the Action, General Forman's Brigade of Jersey Militia has quitted us. The men began to be uneasy at their situation and desirous to return Home; and as by some intelligence received from General Dickenson, there was reason to imagine there might be a call for their services in the Jersies, it was thought expedient to gratify their desire.

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The state of our Water defence on the Delaware, is far from being as flattering as could be wished. After some slight opposition from the Jersey Militia under Genl Newcomb, a detachment of the Enemy took possession of Billingsport. This perhaps is an event of no material consequence. But it is to be lamented that many of the Officers and Seamen on board the Gallies, have manifested a disposition that does them little honor. Looking upon their Situation to be desperate, or probably from worse motives, they have been guilty of the most alarming desertions. Two whole Crews,

including the Officers, have deserted to the Enemy. I learn however by Capt. Bruer, who is this moment arrived here from the Fleet, that the Accounts they have received from the City of our late Attack, were such, as to have produced a favourable change, and to have inspired them with more confidence. I would here observe, that the charge of bad conduct was by no means applicable to the whole, far from it. He further adds, that four of the Enemys Ships made an Attempt Yesterday morning to weigh the Chevaux de frizes opposite Billingsport; but were repulsed by our Gallies, which has also contributed to raise the spirits of the seamen. Our Garrison on Fort Island, consisting of little more than Two hundred Continental Troops under Lt. Colo. Smith,<sup>72</sup> appear determined to maintain their post to the last extremity.

I beg leave to mention to Congress, that there is a great deficiency of General Officers in this Army. When the detachment coming from Peek's Kill joins us, we shall have thirteen Brigades. These require as many Brigadiers and six Major Generals. Instead of these, we shall have only four Major Generals and Eleven Brigadiers and the deficiency will be still increased by the death of Genl. Nash which from every appearance is momentarily to be expected. General Woodford's absence, occasioned by his wound, adds to our embarrassments, tho' it will be but for a time. Under these Circumstances, Congress will be sensible that the government of the Army cannot go on with that energy, which is essential to its well being and success. Neither Officers nor Men will transfer the respect

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and obedience they pay to a General Officer, to a Colonel, who happens to be appointed to

72. Baron d'Arendt commanded at Fort Mifflin until October 27, when he was forced by illness to retire. The command was then assumed by Lieut. Col. Samuel Smith, but not without some dispute.

the temporary command of a Brigade; nor will he, knowing his authority to be only temporary, be as Solicitous to enforce it, as one who is conscious he is to continue in the station he fills. Want of leisure prevents my being more particular at this time; but I shall take the liberty, in a day or two, to point out the Troops that are in want of General Officers, with my observations on the Subject. I cannot however omit this opportunity of recommending Genl McDougall to their notice. This Gentleman, from the time of his Appointment as Brigadier, from his abilities, military knowledge and approved bravery, has every claim to promotion. If I mistake not, he was passed over in the last appointments of Major Generals and younger Officers preferred before him; but his disinterested attachment to the Service, prevented his acting in the manner that is customary in like circumstances. This I think gives him a peculiar title to esteem, and concurs with the opinion I have of his value as an Officer, to make me wish it may appear advisable to Congress, to promote him to one of the vacancies.

It would be well, the intended inquiry into the Conduct of Genl Sinclair<sup>73</sup> could be brought to a speedy issue, and if he is acquitted to the satisfaction of Congress, as his general Character as an Officer is good, that he may be again restored to the service.

By a Letter this Evening received from Colo. Hawkes Hay of Haverstraw, dated the 5th at 4 O'Clock P.M., Four Ships of War,

73. Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair.

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a considerable number of Armed Vessels, Eight Transports and Forty flat Bottom Boats, arrived that morning in the Bay opposite that place and were landing Troops at Verplank's point. Their number nor design were not known. I have the honor &c.<sup>74</sup>

P.S. Inclosed you will find a Copy of a Letter from Colo. Mifflin, containing an account of the Action of the 4th, as mention'd by the British Officers in Philadelphia. I would beg leave to observe, that I think Miss Leonard's name should not be mentioned.<sup>75</sup>

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Qurs. near Pawlins Mills, October 7, 1777.

Sir: I am favour'd with yours of the 1st and 2d Inst. The Troops coming in from Virginia, should have directions to proceed from Lancaster down what is called the Horse Shoe Road, and Cross Schuylkill about one Mile and a half below Potts grove, when they have crossed the River, they will hear where the Army is encamped and they must reach it by the most direct route. I have given Authorities to Mr. Henry of Lancaster and to several others, to impress Blankets Shoes, Stockings and other cloathing; but unless Congress or the

74. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison; the draft is in that of Harrison and Alexander Hamilton.

75. Col. Jonathan Mifflin's letter of October 6 was to Col. Clement Biddle. A copy of it, by Caleb Gibbs, is filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. Miss Leonard, who had just come from Philadelphia, gave the following account: "In her presence several British Officers who had returned from the Action of the 4th. Instant Confessed that they had never met with so severe a Drubbing since the Battle of Bunkers Hill, that the Attack was made with great Judgment and Supported with equal Bravery, that Genl. Agnew was killed on the spot. Genl. Grant Mortally wounded (and reported to be dead before she left the City) two Colo. Killd. and a great Number of officers wounded,

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that all the Hospitals in town would not Contain the wounded. Six Rooms were bespoke for wounded Officers at her Aunt's, immediately on the Alarm all the troops march'd out of the City not a single Centry was left. The Tories talk of moving off with Genl. Howe that two more such worsters must ruin them. The General talk of the British officers before the Action was that immediately after the Compleating their Fortifications which they are Carrying on with the greatest Expedition they intended to take the field but now they begin to be apprehensive of Genl. Washington pushing his Succes. they receive no supplies from Jersey but a good deal from over the Schuylkill Continental money has not been cryd down but is taken at Several Shops. Mrs. House and Mrs. Gard are ordered out of their houses which are to be given away. Mrs. Kersly lives in Doctr. Shippens house which she has received *for services done*, Genl. Howe is to live in Genl. Cadwallader's House, when he comes to the City he has rode in but once Hd. Quarters are at German Town. All the Furniture in the deserted houses is collecting and to be sold at Vendue. The Allans are all in Phila. Bill is raising a Regiment which is call'd General Howes."

Board of War will extend the matter much farther, I fear very little, in comparison to our wants, will be done, for it cannot be expected that I can spare Officers and Men, at this critical Juncture, to go upon that business. If any parcels of Shoes are in the hands of particular persons in the Country, there is no other method to be fallen upon, but to take them and pay a reasonable price for them. This I have done in several instances and I must beg and intreat, that if you know of any such parcels, that they may be immediately seized and sent on to the Army.

I know not where Major Nicholas<sup>76</sup> is or what were his particular orders; but I think you had better direct him not to bring his Arms and Stores further down than Bethlehem or that Neighbourhood, from thence they can be removed to the Western parts of the state, if it should be thought more secure.

As Govr. Trumbull obtained the Arms for the State of Connecticut, by an order from the Board of War or from Congress, I think they should direct him to return them into the

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Public Magazine, when the State is in no danger of invasion. I shall direct Genl Heath not to keep any more, than the three Regiments now raising, have actually occasion for.

When Mr. Mease has removed all his Stores from Trenton, I expect to see him here. I recommended it to him, to fix his principal Store at Lancaster, as thinking it would be the most likely place to get Cloathing made up.

76. Col. Robert Nicholas, Assistant Commissary of Military Stores. He was bringing a shipment of arms from the laboratory at Springfield, Mass.

Those Recruits, who are under such Circumstances that they cannot come in for want of Cloathes had better remain at Lancaster till they can get a supply.

I expect Genl Varnum with 1250 Men from Peekskill will join me to Morrow. The State Regiment of Virginia came in to day, and their Militia are following. I am &ca.77

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Pennibackers Mill, October 8, 1777.

Sir: As Genl How's Operations are in this Quarter and his Object in all probability fixed for this Campaign; I am induced to submit it to the consideration of Congress, If the Whole or a part of the Regiment of Artillery, commanded by Colo. Harrison<sup>95</sup> should not be immediately ordered to join this Army. In the late Actions, the Corps under Genl. Knox has suffered severely and it is so reduced by the Number of killed and wounded, that we are obliged to make drafts from the other Batallions, to supply their places. The measure I have ventured to submit, will not, from present appearances, be attended with any ill consequences, if carried into execution and the less so, as the State of Virginia, according to my information, is raising Another Regiment. Should it be

77. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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95. Col. Charles Harrison, of the First Continental Artillery. He retired in January, 1783.

thought adviseable, Congress will transmit their orders to Colo. Harrison. If the Regiment comes, they need not bring their Artillery. I have, etc.<sup>96</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp, 26 Miles from Phila., October 10, 1777.

Sir: On Wednesday Evening, I received the honor of your Letter of the 7th with its several Inclosures.

The providing of suitable Quarters for the Troops during the Winter, demands our attention; but I confess, it is difficult to say where they will be. Sundry circumstances may occur, in the course of the Campaign, to render any Provision which might now be thought of, altogether improper.

In respect to Genl. Putnam's Letter, tho' the Accounts transmitted by Colo. Hawks Hay indicate, that the Enemy had some attack in contemplation; yet I cannot but think, the Force the General mentions to have been at New York was greatly exaggerated. The highest number of the Reinforcements said to have arrived, is three Thousand and these mentioned to be half boys. Other Reports make it much less,

96. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

and some as low as five or six Hundred. However, be it what it may, it is not in my power to grant him aid. Had the Reinforcement arrived, before the Troops marched from Peekskill, so many might not have been ordered from thence; but the case was otherwise, or at least, I was not apprized of their arrival, and the Detachments from thence, were directed by the advice of my Genl Officers, who had under consideration, the State of the whole force at that post and its dependencies according to a General return. At the



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same time, I urged Genl Putnam to call in all his out posts, and to write in pressing terms to Govr. Trumbull, to assist him with some Militia. I have not heard a Single syllable more of the Troops or Fleet mentioned by Colo. Hawks Hay, except a vague report to day, that a number, supposed to be about Fifteen Hundred had landed on this side the River at Haver-straw. If the fact is so, it is probable they mean to pass thro' the Clove and invest the Forts. I have great confidence in the activity and bravery of Governor Clinton, and I trust, if such is their view, they will meet at least with a Spirited, if not a Successful opposition. I have sent up Lt Colo. Radiere, One of the Engineers, with orders to direct such Other Works as may appear necessary.

There was a very severe Cannonade on Wednesday Night. It began about 12 OClock and continued till yesterday Morning between 7 and 8. I have not learnt the occasion, but from the direction, suppose it was at Fort Mifflin or an Engagement between our armed Vessels and the Enemy's Ships,

which probably were making a second attempt against the Chevaux de frizes. I have determined to maintain the post at Red Bank, if it can be done, and have detached Colo. Greene there, with his Regiment of Rhode Island Troops, consisting of about Two Hundred and Twelve Effective privates. I have also written to Genl Newcomb of Jersey, pressing him to give all the aid he can from the Militia.

Since my Letter of the 7th we have been joined by more of the Virginia Militia. The whole number now in Camp amounts to about 1100. Many of their Arms are indifferent, and almost the whole are destitute of Pouches and Other necessary Accoutrements.

On Sunday the Enemy evacuated Billingsport. They left all our Cannon, but burnt the Platforms and Carriages.

Inclosed you will receive a Letter addressed to me by Colo. Portail. Congress will judge of the Contents, and decide upon them as they may think they Merit.

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The Military Chest is nearly exhausted, not having more than Ten thousand Dollars in It, and a large part of the Army is to pay for the Month of August. Besides their claims, large sums are wanted by the Quarter Master General and for other purposes. Congress, I hope, will order such immediate Supply to be forwarded to the Pay Master Genl., as shall be in their power.

October 11.

I wish to know what Stores of Lead we have and what

expectations of further Supplies. I am rather uneasy on this head, as I have not been able to obtain satisfaction on some inquiries, within the course of a few days. The Cannonade mentioned above, was between our Gallies and a Detachment of the Enemy, who were attempting to throw up a Battery at Webbs or the lowest ferry on Schuylkill. It has been repeated this Morning. Their design in erecting this Battery probably is to cover their passage to Province Island, from whence by occupying the Grounds about the Pest Houses, they may expect to annoy Fort Mifflin.

Our distress for want of Shoes and stockings is amazingly great, particularly for want of the former. On this Account we have a great many Men, who cannot do duty and several detained at the Hospitals for no other Cause. I must request Congress to continue their exertions to releive us, and to direct every supply of these and other necessaries to be forwarded as soon as they possibly can after they are collected. It will be proper to send them on, as fast as they can be procured, without waiting to make up a considerable quantity to be brought at one time.

I was this morning honored with your Favors of the 9th and their several Inclosures.<sup>18</sup> I feel in the most sensible manner, the honorable approbation Congress have been pleased to give of my conduct and that of the Army under my command in the Action on the 4th Inst. Nor am I less indebted to you, Sir, for the polite mode, in which you have conveyed

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their Sentiments. I shall communicate the Resolve upon the Subject to the Army and hope, if a

18. Hancock's letter (October 9) stated his satisfaction that everything had been done at Germantown to insure success: "Something must still be left to Fortune. It is not in Mortals to *command* Success. But permit me to say, Sir, you have done more on this Occasion, You have *deserved* it."

The inclosures included the resolve of October 8, thanking Washington for his "wise and well concerted attack upon the enemy's army near Germantown." Congress also resolved that Henry Laurens and Thomas Heyward be added to the committee appointed "to carry into execution the resolution of Congress ordering a medal to be struck and presented to Genl. Washington." No further information appears in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*. The medal was never struck.

favorable opportunity offers, under the Smiles of Providence, they will merit by more Substantial Services, the further applause of their Country.

The Resolution of the 8th for preventing supplies and intelligence being carried to the Enemy, appears to me to be a salutary one, and I hope it will be attended with the most beneficial consequences.<sup>19</sup> That it may be known among the Inhabitants, who are in this Neighbourhood and who have been guilty of such practices, I would wish to receive several printed Copies, that they may be distributed in proper places. I have &c.

P.S. I have just now received a line from the Pay Master Genl. on the Subject of Money which I inclose.<sup>20</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, October 13, 1777.

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Sir: Since I had the honour of addressing you on the 11th Inst., nothing material has happened between our Army and General Howe's. The inclosed Copies of Commodore Hazlewood's and Colonel Bradford's Letters, will shew the situation of Affairs in

19. The resolves of October 8 granted Washington power to arrest all persons carrying intelligence or supplies to the enemy and conferred on courts-martial the power to punish such offenses by death or other punishment; also persons spreading false intelligence were to be apprehended and punished by either civil or military authority. These powers were to remain in force until Jan. 1, 1778. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Oct. 8, 1777.)

20. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

the Navy and at Fort Mifflin on the 11th which are the latest accounts I have received from thence; But there has been a warm Cannonade since, which continued with but little intermission 'till between Two and three O'Clock yesterday afternoon when it ceased. The result I have not heard; but I hope, from the determined Spirit of the Fleet and the Garrison, matters continue as we could wish.

I received an Express last night from Genl Putnam, informing me of the Capture of Fort Montgomery and the consequent evacuation of Peekskill. I should send Copies of his letters to me, but as the Express, who brought them, had dispatches for Congress, I conclude he has advised them fully on the subject. These events may have an unhappy influence on our Northern affairs, but as the Connecticut Militia seemed to be coming in fast and Govr. Clinton is exerting himself to bring out the force of New York, If Genl. Putnam can but keep pace with their fleet in their progress up the River, I hope he will be able to frustrate their design of relieving Genl. Burgoyne and that every thing will still terminate well in that Quarter.

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It gives me pain to repeat so often, the wants of the Army and nothing would induce me to it, but the most urgent necessity. Every mode hitherto adopted for supplying them, has proved inadequate, notwithstanding my best endeavours to make the most of the means which have been in my power. The inclosed return will shew how great our deficiency in the most essential Articles. What New expedient Congress can devise for more effectually

answering these demands I know not, persuaded as I am, that their closest attention has not been wanting to a matter of so great importance. But circumstanced as we are, I am under an absolute necessity of troubling them, that if any new source can be opened for alleviating our distresses, it may be embraced, as speedily as possible. For it is impossible, that any Army so unprovided can long subsist, or act with that vigor which is requisite to ensure success.

The return now inclosed, is for Troops present in Camp, besides which there are numbers in the several Hospitals totally destitute of the necessaries they require to fit them for the field, and on this account alone are prevented from joining their Corps. The Recruits coming in are also in the same melancholy predicament. I cannot ascertain with precision what quantity of Cloathing is at this time in Mr. Mease's hands, but from every account what he has can administer but a very partial relief. I know he is intirely bare of some of the most Capital articles we want.

With respect to Cartouch Boxes, without which it is impossible to act, I cannot find from my inquiries, that there are any in store. Several of the Continental Troops are deficient in this instance, and what adds to our distress, there are but very few of the Southern Militia that are provided. I am trying to make a collection about the Country, but from the information I have receiv'd, the measure will be

attended with but little success. This want, tho' not remedied immediately, may be removed in time, and I would take the liberty to recommend, that the earliest attention should be had to making a large supply. I would also advise that much care should

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be used in choosing the Leather. None but the best and thickest is proper for the purpose, and each Box should have a small inner flap for the greater security of the Cartridges against rain and moist weather. The Flaps in general, are too small and do not project sufficiently over the ends or sides of the Boxes. I am convinced of the utility nay necessity of these improvements and that the adoption of them, tho' they will incur an additional expence at first, will prove a considerable saving, and of the most beneficial consequences. For we know from unhappy experience in the severe rain on the 16th. Ultmo, the few Boxes we had of this construction, preserved the ammunion without injury, whilst it was almost wholly destroyed in those of the Common form with a single flap.

There is one thing more, which I cannot omit mentioning to Congress, and which in my opinion, has a claim to their most Serious attention. I mean the general defective state of the Regiments which compose our Armies. Congress will find, from a view of the returns transmitted from time to time, that they do not amount to near half of their just complement. What can be done to remedy this I know not. But it is certain every idea of voluntary inlistments seems to be at an end; and it is equally certain, that the mode of

drafting has been carried on, with such want of energy in some states and so much disregarded in others, that but a small accession of force has been derived from it. These facts are Sufficently interesting of themselves, but there are others to be added. I am told that Virginia, in her regulations for drafting, extended her plan only to nine regiments that were first raised. In what Policy this was founded, I cannot determine but the other Six, are to receive no reinforcements from that Source. Nor do matters stop here. The Engagements of the first nine regiments, I am informed were temporary, and according to the Officers accounts, the longest period to which any of the Men are bound to serve is next April; many are not obliged so long, and there are some, who claim a discharge at this time. I do not mention these things thro' choice, but from a principle of duty, to the end that Congress may devise some timely, effectual provision for the whole if such shall be in their power.<sup>42</sup> It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the subject, and I will only observe, that the consequences of calling the militia into the field, in the course of the war, have been so

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severely and ruinously felt, that I trust our views will never be turned to them, but in cases of the greatest extremity.

In pursuance of the Resolution of Congress, a Court of Inquiry has set upon Genl Sullivan. They met on the 10th and continued the examination till the 12th, when they came to the Inclosed opinion. The Depositions and papers which were

42. Opposite this sentence is a manuscript marginal note, made apparently after this letter reached Congress: "Not acted upon."

before the Court were many and prolix. They are not transmitted, but they may be obtained from the Court if wanted. Besides the depository proofs which they had of Wounded and dead Officers, they had many Gentlemen before them in Person. I have the honor etc.<sup>43</sup>

P.S. Octr. 14th. I last night receiv'd letters from Commodore Hazlewood and Colo. Smith. The situation of affairs was nearly the same the Evening before as when the Commodore and Colo. Bradford wrote on the 10th and 11th. The Cannonade mention'd above was from our Gallies at the Enemy's redoubts.<sup>44</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters at Peter Wentz's, October 16, 1777.

Sir: I have been duly honoured with your favours of the 12th and 13th Inst. with their several Inclosures.

In respect to the Resolution directing a flag to be sent to Genl. Howe, I am inclined to think, that the information upon which it was framed was without foundation. The Letters which have come from our Officers, who have been lately taken, generally

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43. This letter was read in Congress October 16 and referred to the Board of War. (See General Orders, Oct. 16, 1777, *post.*)

44. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

A greatly faded fragment of a letter, in Washington's writing, dated Oct. 13, 1776, is among the Draper manuscripts in the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Apparently addressed to Country Lieutenant Samuel Hunter, Northumberland County, Pa., it seems to call for a certified account of ration purchases by the Continental Army commissaries in that county. The names of Colonel [Henry] Hollingsworth, Deputy Quartermaster General, and Col.—Rumford are decipherable.

mention, that their treatment has been tolerably good; and such privates, as have escaped, have said nothing in the course of their examination of their having been compelled to work. For these reasons I have taken the liberty to decline sending the Flag.<sup>62</sup> At the same time Congress may be assured, If our Prisoners suffer any wrongs, I shall take every means in my power to have them redressed, as soon as I am apprized of them.

It is with the highest satisfaction I congratulate Congress on the Success of our Arms at the Northward in the Action of the 7th. An event of the most interesting importance at this critical juncture. From the happy train in which things then were, I hope we shall soon hear of the most decisive advantages.

We moved this morning from the Encampment at which we have been for six or seven days past, and are just arrived at the Grounds we occupied before the Action of the 4th. One motive for coming here, is to divert the Enemy's attention and force from the Forts. These they seem to consider as Capital objects and from their operations mean to reduce if possible. At present their designs are directed against Fort Mifflin and the Chevaux de frize. I have therefore detached a further Reinforcement to the Garrison.



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I yesterday thro' the hands of Mrs. Ferguson<sup>63</sup> of Graham Park, received a Letter of a very curious and extraordinary nature from Mr. Duche<sup>64</sup> which I have thought proper

62. Congress having been informed that American prisoners of war were compelled to work on the Philadelphia fortifications by the British, resolved that General Washington send a flag of inquiry to General Howe and take such measures as seemed proper with British prisoners. This proceeding is stricken out in the *Journals of the Continental Congress* and in the margin is written "false intelligence."

63. Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson. She is the same person who approached Joseph Reed with a suggestion of bribery to desert the American cause.

64. The Rev. Jacob Duché. He wished Washington to recommend that the Declaration of Independence be rescinded and that he declare an immediate cessation of hostilities. If Congress would not look favorably on such a course, Duché blandly advised Washington to "Negotiate for America at the Head of Your Army." The following extract is typical of the entire letter: "Perhaps it may be said, that it is 'better to die than be Slaves.' This indeed is a splendid maxim in theory: And perhaps in some instances may be found experimentally true. But where there is the least Probability of an happy Accommodation, surely Wisdom and Humanity call for some Sacrifices to be made, to prevent inevitable Destruction. You, well know, that there is but one invincible Bar to such an Accommodation. Could this be removed, other obstacles might readily be overcome. 'Tis to you, and you alone your bleeding Country looks, and calls aloud for this Sacrifice. Your Arm alone has Strength sufficient to remove this Bar. May Heaven inspire you with the glorious Resolution of exerting this Strength at so interesting a Crisis, and thus immortalizing Yourself as Friend and Guardian of Your Country! Your penetrating Eye needs no more explicit Language to discern my meaning."

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Duché's original letter (14 pages on folio-size paper) is filed with this of Washington in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. A copy of it, in the writing of Alexander Hamilton and Tench Tilghman, is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

to transmit to Congress. To this ridiculous, illiberal performance, I made a very short reply by desiring the bearer of it, if she should hereafter, by any accident, meet with Mr. Duche, to tell him I should have returned it unopened, If I had had any idea of the contents, observing at the same time, that I highly disapproved the intercourse she seemed to have been carrying on and expected it would be discontinued. Notwithstanding the Author's assertion, I cannot but suspect that this Measure did not originate with him, and that he was induced to it, by the hope of establishing his interest and peace more effectually with the Enemy. I have the honor etc.<sup>65</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, October 16, 1777.

Sir: The inclosed lists contain the Names of the officers in Colo. Lees and Colo. Jacksons Regiments<sup>67</sup> with the dates of their appointments. You will be pleased to have Commissions filled up accordingly and sent to me and I will forward them to Boston. I have no blank Commissions at present with me, be pleased therefore, to send me some, as many Vacancies have happened by the late

<sup>65</sup>. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

<sup>67</sup>. Cols. William R. Lee and Henry Jackson's Additional Continental regiments.

actions and I should be glad to fill them up. I am, etc.<sup>68</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

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Head Quarters, October 18, 1777.

Sir: I do myself the honor to transmit you the inclosed most interesting and agreeable intelligence which I have this moment recd. from Genl Putnam. I can scarce doubt but Genl Gates has sent you an Express, but lest he, from the important Business in which he was engaged, should not have done it, I have immediately forwarded it, that you might not be debarred from so great a pleasure an instant longer than was necessary. I have the Honor etc.<sup>74</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Qurs., near White Marsh, October 21, 1777.

Sir:

68. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

74. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

I last night had the honor to receive your Letter of the 17th Inst. with its several Inclosures.

[I heartily wish the States may feel the importance of filling their Batallions and may, in consequence of the Recommendations of Congress, adopt such Measures as will prove effectual for the purpose. I cannot but think, that heretofore there has been a want of attention in this instance, and that the subject, tho' interesting to the last degree, has been viewed with too much indifference. The Resolution respecting Deserters, I hope will also have their Notice. It is highly necessary, that they should come into some regulations for apprehending them and punishing those who give them countenance. If this is not done our force will be always diminishing, and no exertions in the Army will prevent it. I shall try the effects of a Proclamation,<sup>96</sup> on those who are now delinquents, and shall be happy if it

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meets with success; But confess, from the experiment I have made, that I am not sanguine in my expectations, that it will be the case.

As to the Recruiting Officers, I am constrained to observe, that, notwithstanding the Resolution of Congress of the 31st of July<sup>97</sup> and my circular Letter on the Subject of it, to many of the States,<sup>98</sup> I have not received an Account, that any Officers have been appointed, except in Connecticut and Jersey.]<sup>99</sup>

On Sunday the Enemy evacuated Germantown and withdrew themselves within their Lines near the City. They seem determined to reduce the Forts, if possible, and for

96. See Proclamation, Oct. 24, 1777, *post*.

97. The resolves of July 31 recommended that the States divide their territory into recruiting districts and to appoint a manager for each district to direct the recruiting and arrange for capturing deserters.

98. See Circular to the States, Aug. 4, 1777, *ante*.

99. The paragraphs in brackets are marked by Secretary Charles Thomson as having been copied and sent to the States. This was done in accordance with a resolve of Congress of October 24.

this purpose have thrown several parties over on Province Island. I was informed this afternoon, that a detachment also passed the Delaware at Coopers Ferry in the Morning. If the account be true, and I have no doubt of it, It is highly probable they mean to make an attack upon the Garrison at Red Bank. I am taking every Measure in my power, to counteract them and have written to Genls. Foreman and Newcomb of Jersey, to afford every aid they can, to relieve the Fort in case they do invest it. Against Fort Mifflin they have kept up a Canonade, more or less, every day, and have thrown Several Shells, but without doing any great damage. The explosion of one killed a private and wounded three

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Others who were in a Barracks where it fell. they also set fire to two Ammunition boxes, with a Hot Ball on the 19th which did some injury to the Barracks. I do not recollect that we have suffered lately in any instances besides these. I have the honor &c.<sup>1</sup>

1. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. It was read in Congress on October 24.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Qurs., near White Marsh, October 22, 1777.

Sir: I am favored with yours of the 18th with a Return of our Military Stores in the different States. I sincerely wish they were more numerous, but I hope the Gentlemen of the Secret Committee, in whose department it falls to import these Articles, have been taking care to procure a further supply. Major Nicholas,<sup>12</sup> who is just returned from the Eastward, informs me, that a large quantity of Lead has lately arrived at Boston, upon Private Account; he, finding that lead was wanting at Springfield, wrote to Genl. Heath to have it purchased up. But for fear it may be neglected, I shall write to Genl. Heath and I think the Board had better also direct the Continental Agent at Boston to secure it. I hope that the Council of this State may adopt and carry into execution, any plan that the Board may point out for the Collection of Shoes, Blankets &c. they must be had upon some terms or other and I will readily contribute any Assistance that may be demanded of me.

12. Maj. Samuel(?) Nicholas, of the Continental Marines.

I dont know how it would answer to make Cartouch Boxes of painted Canvass, instead of Leather, but I fear it would not do, as I am pretty certain that after they had been wet once or twice and little worn, that they would not turn rain. I would not wish to see a rash experiment tried upon an Accoutrement, on the goodness of which our whole safety depends. If the wood of the Cartouch box is not intirely covered with leather, it must be made of seasoned Oak or some hard Wood, for I am convinced, that poplar, of which they are commonly made, would admit water very easily.

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Congress have reason to complain of my not making them General Returns of the Army more frequently, but I hope they will excuse me, when they consider that I have not been for some time past two days in a place, and I assure you it sometime happens, that the Officers have not paper to make the necessary Returns. But I will take the first Opportunity of making a full and regular one. I am etc.<sup>13</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, October 24, 1777.

Sir: I do myself the honor of transmitting to Congress

13. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

the inclosed copies of sundry letters just now received, and congratulate them most sincerely on the important intelligence which they contain.<sup>27</sup> The damage the Enemy have sustained in their Ships, I hope will prevent their future attempts to gain the passage of the River, and the repulse of the Troops under Count Donnop and his Captivity, I flatter myself will also be attended with the most happy consequences. At the time these Actions happened, a Supply of ammunition was on the way to the Forts, and I have also ordered a further Quantity to be immediately sent. By Colo. Blaine one of the issuing Commissaries who left Red Bank, in the morning before the action, I am happily informed, that he had thrown considerable supplies of provision into both garrisons, he also adds, that he came from Jersey this morning, and that the Enemy had recrossed the Delaware and returned to Philadelphia.

I have written to Colonel Greene, that the Prisoners must be immediately sent from his Post, and Mr. Clymer,<sup>28</sup> a Deputy under Mr. Boudinot,<sup>29</sup> will set out to morrow morning to make a proper disposition of them.

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It gives me great concern, to inform Congress, that after all my exertions we are still in a distressed situation for want of Blankets and Shoes. At this time, no inconsiderable part of our force are incapable of acting thro' the deficiency of the latter, and I fear, without we can be relieved, it will be the case with two thirds of the Army in the course of a few days.

27. These were from Maj. Samuel Ward and Commodore John Hazelwood.

Ward stated: "On the 21st Inst. Four Battalions of Germans, amounting to about 1200 men commanded by Baron Donop Colo. Commandant landed at Cooper's Ferry and Marched the same Evening to Haddonfield. At 3 o'Clock Yesterday Morning, they marched for this place; when the guard at Timber Creek bridge were informed of their approach, they took up that Bridge, and the Enemy filed off to the Left, and crossed at a Bridge four miles above. Their Advanced Parties were discovered within a quarter of a mile of the fort at 12 o'clock; At half after 4 o'Clock P.M. They sent a flag to summons the Fort, who was told, that it should never be surrendered. At three quarters after four, they began a Brisk Canonade, and soon after advanced in two Columns to the Attack. They passed the Abattis, gained the ditch, and some few got over the Pickets, but the fire was so heavy, that they soon were drove out again with considerable loss, and retreated precipitately towards Haddonfield, The Enemy's loss amounts to 1 Lieut. Col., 3 Capts., 4 Lieuts., and near 70 killed and. the Baron Donop, his Brigade Major, a Captain-Lieutenant and upwards of 70 nonCommissioned Officers and Privates wounded and taken Prisoners. We are also informed, that several waggons are taken. *The Colo. proposes to send the wounded Officers to Burlington.* He also enjoins me to tell your Excellency, that both Officers and Privates behaved with the greatest Bravery. The Action Lasted 40 minutes."

The Hessians confessed to a loss of 402 killed and wounded, of whom 26 were officers. The American loss was 14 killed, 23 wounded, and 1 captain, who was reconnoitering, taken prisoner. Donop died of his wounds three days after the action.

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The naval part of the action was described by Commodore Hazelwood in a more complete report of October 26: "While the Fort at Red Bank was attacked, the Augusta of 64 Guns, the Roebuck of 44, Two Frigates, the Merlin of 18, and a Galley, came up through the lower Chevaux de Frieze, which were attack'd by the floating Battery's and some of the Galleys, while the rest of the Galleys was flanking the enemy, that were attacking the Fort where the Galleys did much execution. As soon as the enemy was repuls'd at the Fort, the Ships finding so hot a fire, endeavour'd to fall down, but the Augusta and Merlin ran aground. Early next morning the Galleys and floating Batteries attacked them, when an incessant fire was kept up. About 11 o'Clock I believe one of our Shot set the Augusta on fire, and at 12 she blew up, being aground. The engagement continued with the other Ships, and at 3 in the afternoon, the Merlin we think also took fire and blew up, then the firing ceased on both sides. The Roebuck dropped down to the lower Chevaux de Frieze and went thro'. Yesterday I went down to the Wrecks, and found that the Guns of both ships may be got out, if the enemy's Ships can be kept at a proper distance. We brought off two 24 Pounders, and as soon as possible shall endeavour for the rest."

Commodore Hazelwood complained of his lack of men. "The fleet is now so poorly Mann'd," he wrote, "and the constant cry from Fort Mifflin is to guard that Post, that I know not how to act without more assistance." There had been numerous desertions from the fleet. Lieutenant Colonel Smith had written (October 2): "So general a discontent and panic runs through that part of the fleet, that neither Officer nor men can be confided in, they conceive the River is lost, if the enemy gets possession of Billingsport nothing can convince them of the contrary and I am persuaded as soon as that fort is taken that almost all the fleet will desert, indeed from their disposition I am induced to believe they will openly avow themselves and desert Officers with their Crew (which has been the case with two) perhaps with their Gallies."

These letters, dated Oct. 22, 1777, are in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.



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28. Daniel Clymer. Deputy Commissary General of Prisoners.

29. Elias Boudinot. He was Commissary General of Prisoners of the Continental Army; resigned in May, 1778; later a Delegate to Congress from New Jersey and President of Congress.

I am and have been waiting with the most anxious impatience, for a confirmation of Genl Burgoynes surrender. I have received no further intelligence respecting it, except vague report, than the first accounts which came to hand so long ago as Saturday morning. If Congress have had authentic advices about it, I wish to be favored with them. I have the honor etc.<sup>30</sup>

### **To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD<sup>49</sup>**

Head Quarters, October 25, 1777.

Gentlemen: The application of Commodore Hazelwood for seamen, and the necessity there is of his being supplied, if possible, induce me to submit it to the Consideration of your Board, Whether those in the Frigates near Burlington, cannot be more beneficially employed with him, than where they now are.

The importance of defending the Navigation below, or in other words of preventing the Enemy from becoming the Masters of it, is obvious to all. If they cannot effect this, we may hope, that they will be obliged, either to evacuate the City, or to expose themselves to great hazard, if not ruin, by sending out frequent

30. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. It was read in Congress on October :27 and referred to the Committee of Intelligence.

49. The Continental Navy Board, then at Bordentown, N.J., consisted of Francis Hopkinson and John Wharton.

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Detachments for procuring and Convoying provisions and other necessary supplies. Under these ideas, I think there should be every possible, prudent exertion to provide the Commodore with a suitable number of hands for manning his Vessels.

The Ground, I presume, for retaining the Sailors on board the Frigates, is their Security. This I fear, from their unfinished, unweildy state could not be provided for, in case the Enemy should attempt to take them. I am certain of it. Will it not be more advisable therefore, to try other means for their safety? I mean to Scuttle them, If they can be raised again. I am not a judge of such matters, but if it can be done, I should think the measure highly expedient. The Commodore might then be reinforced and the Frigates would be secure against any present efforts, which the Enemy can make to possess or destroy them. These are not the only good consequences that may be pointed out. I will mention one more of great weight. If the Frigates should be taken by the Enemy, of which there is great danger in my opinion, they will make them exceedingly formidable against our little navy. So much so, that in Conjunction with the Delaware and such other Vessels, as they may equip, there will be the strongest reason to apprehend their falling a Sacrifice. I have written to Commodore Hazelwood for his sentiments and those of the navy Officers upon the subject, and practicability weighing them, if they should be sunk, which I shall take the Liberty of laying before you

by the earliest opportunity after they are obtained. I have the honor etc.<sup>50</sup>

### **\*To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD**

15th Mile Stone on the Skippack Road, October 27, 1777.

Gentn: The more I reflect upon the evil that may arise from the Enemy's possessing themselves of our unfinished Frigates up the Delaware, the more convinced I am of the indispensable obligation we are under to prevent it, effectually. If no other method could be devised, I should be for absolutely burning them; but scuttling and sinking [them] with,

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or without Ballast, as those who are best acquainted with the difficulties of raising them in either State, at this Season [may determine] will, in my judgment answer the end.

You [We all] know that the Enemy have made one vigorous (tho unsuccessful) effort to dispossess us of our Forts, and drive off our Vessels, which defend the Cheveaux de frize in the River; you [we] know also, that besides [burning] the Delaware Frigate, they are busily employed in preparing two other large Armd Vessels at the City. Now [If] in addition to these [they] should they by Surprise, or force,

50. The draft is in the writing of Caleb Gibbs.

obtain the Frigates above Bordentown, and bring the whole in aid of their Ships in a general attack upon our little Fleet (thus surrounded) one [we] may, [but too easily] without the Spirit of divination foretell the consequences. [Their destruction will be certain and inevitable.]

At present, these Ships [Frigates] are of no use to us, whilst the hands are greatly wanted; considered therefore in this point of view, simply, the measure [proposed] in my judgement [opinion] is highly expedient; but [and] under the prevailing Sentiment that the Enemy cannot hold Phila., unless their Shipping is got up, it becomes [appears] absolutely necessary.

The fatal consequences which may result from suffering these Frigates to fall into the Enemys hands is, [are] too obvious to need [more] arguments to prove, [them,] and when it is considered of how little importance they are to us in their present Situation, common prudence requires that they should be so disposed of as to be hereafter useful; and out of the way of being destroyed by the Enemy if they can be no otherwise useful [or being rendered Serviceable] to them.

Upon the whole then, I take the liberty of delivering it to you as my clear opinion, that the Frigates ought to be immediately, and with the utmost secrecy, Sunk, either with, or

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without Ballast (so as to make it next to impossible to raise them without Mens diving, either to unlade, or fix their purchases) and [that] the[ir] Crews [should be] sent down to the Fleet below, where Sailors are exceedingly wanted.

If I have stepped out of the line of my duty to make this request, I am perswaded you will excuse it when I add, that the good of the Service not only in my judgment, but [in] that of others, absolutely requires it [to be carried into execution].<sup>68</sup> I have the honor etc.

### **To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD**

Head Quarters, October 27, 1777.

Gentlemen: I this morning received your favour of the 26th. I refer you to a letter which I wrote you a few hours ago, urging the necessity of Scutling the Frigates immediately. I then imagined that there were a considerable number of Seamen on Board of them; but since I have seen the Returns, I think the necessity more pressing. The people on board could not defend them against a couple of armed Boats. An intelligent lad from Philadelphia says they have been bringing Seamen and flat Boats from the Fleet below, and it is more than probable that they may have their Eye upon the Frigates above, I therefore would advise you to sink, not only them, immediately upon the receipt of this, but every other Vessel,

<sup>68</sup>. The bracketed portions show the words inserted by Robert Hanson Harrison, who thus endeavored to improve Washington's diction, striking out such of Washington's words as interfered with Harrison's concepts of phraseology.

capable of being converted into an armed Vessel<sup>69</sup> The smaller Craft and flat Boats, that are not wanted to transport troops occasionally, to be carried as high up the Creeks and River as possible. The soldiers that were on board the Frigates to be sent under the care of an officer to join their Regiments and the few Seamen down to our Fleet. If

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those Watermen that you mention, who are on board private Vessels, could be prevailed upon by any means to serve in our fleet till the Frost, it would answer a very valuable purpose, and rather than miss of them I would offer handsome terms, [but not so much as to occasion jealousy and uneasiness in those already in Service.] I have the honor to be etc.<sup>70</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Qurs., near White Marsh, November 1, 1777.

Sir: I was duly honored with Mr. Hancock's Letter of the 25th Ult<sup>o</sup>. with its Several Inclosures.

I shall take the case of John More<sup>6</sup> under consideration and will transmit Colo. Mason<sup>7</sup> my determination upon the same.

At this time, I cannot inform the Commissary, whether

69. The Marine Committee of Congress reported to that body that having considered General Washington's order to scuttle the frigates in the Delaware to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy "are of opinion that the frigates should be lightened as much as possible, and either run into some adjacent creek or hauled as high upon shore as may be without ballast, and a battery constructed with the guns of the *Washington* on the most convenient ground to cover the frigates from the enemy; that the frigates should be charged properly with combustibles, and a careful watch employed under a vigilant officer to burn them rather than let them fall into the hands of the enemy; and lest this should fail, that a sufficient number of small craft should be sunk in the channel below the frigates, effectually to obstruct the enemy from moving them down the river, if they should happen to gain possession of them; and a battery be constructed in the most convenient manner to cover the obstructions and prevent the enemy from removing them; that all the vessels of whatever kind should be run up as high above the batteries aforesaid as

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possible, and the most effectual precautions taken immediately on the approach of the enemy.” (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Nov. 4, 1777.) General Washington, if he approved this plan, was to furnish a detachment of troops to aid in the construction and management of the batteries.

70. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The phrase in brackets is in Washington's writing.

6. A private in the Fourth Virginia Regiment. More had been condemned to death by a court-martial for deserting.

7. Col. David Mason, of the Fifteenth Virginia Regiment.

any alterations have or have not been made by General Orders, in the Original ration establishment. I have been under the necessity, from time to time, to send away my orderly Books, and they are necessary to be examined upon the Subject. However, I think it probable that a departure from the first allowance may have been found expedient, and directed by some authority, or the Commissary would not have adopted it. In respect to the alteration, referred to my consideration, it is a matter of consequence and I have desired the Genl. Officers to inform themselves whether it will be agreeable to the Army at large or what other regulations may be necessary in this Instance; As soon as I have their sentiments I will write Congress upon the subject.<sup>8</sup>

The Enemy still consider the possession of our Posts upon the River of great importance, and from their preparation of Fascines &c., and the best information I have been able to obtain, they will make further efforts to carry them. Viewing them in this light myself, and imagining that they would persevere in their plans to occupy them, I wrote some days ago in the most pressing terms to Genls. Dickinson, Forman and Newcomb to afford every aid in their Power from the Militia of Jersey. As yet we have received but little, and I have no encouragement to expect, that it will be much augmented in a short time. This does

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not proceed from a want of Activity and exertion on the part of [the] two first mentioned Gentlemen, whose conduct and Zeal upon every occasion, give them a claim to the Public esteem,

8. See Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Nov. 11, 1777, *post*.

but in a considerable degree from the peculiar circumstances of their State at this time. The apprehensions of an Invasion from Staten Island, keep a large proportion of the Militia from the Eastern and upper part of the State, almost constantly employed at and in the neighbourhood of Elizh. Town and Mr. Livingston's Powers, as Governor, being expired, and no provision made, it seems, for such a contingency; there are none of sufficient authority to order them out, till a new appointment can be had; at least, there is ground to suspect, that the orders and exertions of these two Gentlemen, unassisted by Civil authority, will not be attended with the advantages we wish, and which our affairs require. As to Genl Newcomb, who is in the Neighbourhood of Red Bank, notwithstanding my most urgent and repeated solicitations, I have little to expect from him, if I may form an estimate of his future services from those he has already rendered. Under these circumstances, I have been obliged to detach a further reinforcement of Continental Troops under Genl. Varnum to maintain the two Garrisons if possible, besides Sailors drawn from the line, to Man the Gallies. This detachment, when it arrives, added to the force now in the Forts, will make the whole amount to 1600 effective Rank and file, sent from this Army.

After the Action of the 4th Ult. at German Town, I hoped, we should have been in a situation to attack the Enemy again on those Grounds, and with more success

than in the former instance; But this I was not able to effect. The Severe Rain on the 16th. of Septr, the action on the 4th, the removal of our Stores and having to form a new Elaboratory, added to the small number of hands engaged in the business of it, laid us under difficulties in the capital and essential Article of Ammunition, that could not be surmounted. Every exertion was directed to obtain supplies, but notwithstanding, they

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were inadequate, too scanty, and insufficient to attempt any thing on a large and general scale before the Enemy withdrew themselves. With what we had, in case an experiment had been made, fortune might have decided in our favor for the present, but we should not have been afterwards in a situation to maintain the advantage we might have gained, and if a repulse had taken place and the Enemy pursued, for want of a reserve, we should have been exposed to the most imminent danger of being ruined. The distress of the soldiers for want of Shoes was also a powerful obstacle to the measure. I could wish, that our circumstances were now such, as to authorise a general attack for dislodging them from the City; but I think, that they are not. This also is the opinion of my Genl. Officers upon a full and comprehensive view of matters, as Congress will perceive by the inclosed Copy of the minutes of Council on the 29th Ult., which I have taken the liberty to transmit and lay before them. The superiority of numbers on the part of the Enemy in respect to regular Troops; their superior discipline, and the Redoubts

and lines which they have thrown up between the two Rivers and about the City. The happy state of our affairs at the Northward and the practicability of drawing succours from thence, the consequences of a defeat; these, were all motives which lead to a decision against an attack at this time. I have sent Colo. Hamilton, one of my aids, to Genl Gates, to give him a just representation of things and to explain to him the expediency of our receiving the reinforcements, which have been determined necessary, if they will not interfere and frustrate any important plans he may have formed. Indeed, I cannot conceive that there is any object now remaining, that demands our attention and most vigorous efforts so much, as the destruction of the [British] Army in this Quarter. Should we be able to effect this, we shall have little to fear in future. Genl. Howe's force, according to the state now made, is more considerable, than it was generally supposed to be. I did not think it quite so great myself, but always imagined the common estimate much too low, nor can I positively say what it really is. However, there are strong reasons to believe, that it is not overrated. After the evacuation of German Town, an almost infinite number of scraps and bits of Paper were found, which being seperated and arranged with great industry and



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care, bear the marks of genuine and authentic Returns at different Periods. The manner in which they were destroyed and disposed of give no room

to suspect, that it was the effect of design. In addition to this, I am informed by Genl Putnam, that he had heard a reinforcement of 4. Regts. were coming round to Delaware from New York.

The inclosed Return<sup>9</sup> will give Congress a general view of the strength of this Army, when it was made and a particular one of the Forces of each state which compose it. By this, they will perceive, how greatly deficient the whole are in furnishing their just Quotas. The Militia from Maryland and Virginia are no longer to be counted on. All the former, except about 200 are already gone, and a few days, I expect, will produce the departure of the whole or chief part of the latter, from the importunate applications, which some of them have made. Besides this diminution, I am apprehensive, we shall have several men added to the sick list by reason of the late excessive Rain, and want of Cloaths.

We have not yet come to any determination respecting the disposition of our Troops for the Winter; supposing it a matter of great importance, and that for the present we should be silent upon it. The reasons will readily occur. By continuing the Campaign, perhaps many salutary, if not decisive advantages may be derived. But it appears to me, that this must depend upon the supplies of Cloathing which the men receive. If they cannot be accomodated in this instance, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to do it without effecting

9. Marked as missing in the record copy of this letter in the file of the Secretary of Congress.

their destruction.

I would take the liberty to mention, that I feel myself in a delicate situation with respect to the Marquis Le Fayette. He is extremely solicitous of having a Command equal to his Rank, and possesses very different Ideas as to the purposes of his appointment, from

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those Congress have mentioned to me. He certainly did not understand them. I do not know in what light they will view the Matter, but it appears to me, from a consideration of his illustrious and important connections, the attachment which he has manifested to our cause, and the consequences, which his return in disgust, might produce, that it will be adviseable to gratify him in his wishes, and the more so, as several Gentlemen from France, who came over under some assurances, have gone back disappointed in their expectations. His conduct with respect to them stands in a favorable point of view, having interested himself to remove their uneasiness and urged the impropriety of their making any unfavorable representations upon their arrival at home, and in all his letters has placed our affairs in the best situation he could. Besides, he is sensible, discreet in his Manner, has made great proficiency in our Language and from the disposition he discovered at the Battle of Brandy Wine, possesses a large share of bravery and Military ardor.

There is a French Gentn. here, Monsieur

Vrigney, in whose favor the Marquis seems much interested. He assures me he is an Officer of great merit and from that motive and a regard to the service wishes to see him promoted. The Rank he holds in France and his present expectation are contained in the inclosed Copy of a paper,<sup>10</sup> given me by the Marquis. Monsr. Vrigney also has Honble. certificates of his services nearly corresponding with the Marquis's account of them. If Congress are pleased to honor him with a Commission in the Army of the States, I must try to imploy him.

I took the liberty some short time ago, to mention to Congress the situation of the first nine raised Virginia Regts. and the term for which they stand engaged; and considering that we should suffer greatly by the loss of so large a part of our force, which have been long enured to Service, I thought it advisable to consult the Officers commanding them upon the mode which should appear to them best calculated to reinlist them. They accordingly met, and reported their Sentiments in writing, a Copy of which I have inclosed.<sup>10</sup> I do not know that expedients, more promising of success than those they have pointed out, can

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be adopted. Congress will be pleased to give the matter their earliest attention, and to favor me with their opinion by the first opportunity, whether the indulgence and allowance they have proposed may be granted, and if any additional Bounty may be given, what it shall be. The high sums paid for substitutes and drafts of late, even in the Militia

10. Marked as missing in the record copy of this letter.

service, will make this necessary. For the Soldiers, being well apprized of that Fact, will not be induced to engage again during the War or for three years, for the usual Premium.

I would also lay before Congress a Remonstrance by the Subaltern Officers in the Virginia line,<sup>10</sup> founded on a reform, I thought necessary to take place in the Regts. from that state. These in their establishment were made to consist of Ten Companies. Two more, than were assigned to those of the States in general. This and the great disproportion between the Officers and Men induced me to reduce them to a level, with the rest belonging to the Continent, in order to prevent a considerable, unnecessary expence. To effect this, no new promotions are to be made in the Two extra Companies viz. the 9th and 10th. either to vacancies existing at the time of the Regulation, or to any future ones that may happen therein; and the Subalterns are to remain in their Rank and Command, till they can be promoted in the other eight companies and their Men incorporated. This is what they complain of. I have made a short state of facts, and wish Congress to determine upon them and the remonstrance, as they shall think proper.<sup>11</sup>

At the request of Govr. Clinton, I have transmitted a Copy of his letter to me, giving an account of Genl. Vaughan's expedition up the North River, after the Capture of

10. Marked as missing in the record copy of this letter.

11. Marked as missing in the record copy of this letter.

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Fort Montgomery, and of the destruction committed by his Troops in burning Kingston and the houses and Mills on the River. According to the latest advices, they have returned again, and it is reported, that they have destroyed the Barracks and Forts and gone to New York, But this is not confirmed.<sup>12</sup>

A few days ago, Mr. Franks of Philadelphia, Agent for the British Prisoners, sent out 6000 Continental Dollars to Mr. Richard Graham of Virginia, for the subsistence of the Hessians and other Prisoners in that state. The Policy of Suffering the Enemy to support their Prisoners with money which they refuse themselves and which they attempt to deprecate in every instance they possibly can, appears to me very questionable, and the more so, as it may be Counterfeited. Besides, they have laid us under every difficulty they can devise, as to our Prisoners in their hands. Nothing will do for their support but hard money. If the Enemy were obliged to furnish the same, the quantity with us would be greater, and of course the means of relieving ours easier. I do not know, what consequences a Prohibition against receiving Continental Money or the Currency of any state from them, might involve. I think the Subject is worthy of the consideration of Congress, and for that reason I have mentioned it.

November 3.

The report of the Enemy's having destroyed the Forts and Barracks on the North River and of their having returned to New York is confirmed. I this morning received a letter from 12. The British expedition up the Hudson was commanded by Sir James Wallace and Maj. Gen. John Vaughan. All the boats found in the river and the houses and mills on the banks were burned. On October 15 Kingston was completely destroyed. Vaughan claimed that his troops had been fired upon from houses in Kingston. As soon as the news of Burgoyne's surrender reached Vaughan, the British returned down the river to Fort Montgomery and, soon afterwards, to New York.

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Genl. Putnam upon the subject, a copy of which is transmitted.<sup>13</sup> The information, that they mean to reinforce Genl Howe, I doubt not is true. It has come through several channels, and nothing is more probable. As to their having a further expedition in view, it seems to be questionable. Genl Burgoyne's defeat and the Eastern Troops being ready to be employed in another way, are circumstances against the measure.

Agreeable to my expectation, the Virginia Militia are gone, so that we have none now, in aid of the Continental Troops, but those of this state mentioned in the Return, and a few from Maryland. I do not know what can or will be done to obtain further reinforcements of them. But it appears to me, taking matters in any point of light, that further aids should come from Virginia and Maryland. For should we be able to accomodate the Continental forces with Cloathes, so as to carry on a winters Campaign, their assistance will be material, either to maintain a Blockade, or in any decisive stroke we may attempt. And if they cannot be so provided, and we should be obliged to retire into Quarters, their service will be still more necessary to assist in covering the country against incursions for forage and Provisions. The militia of this State, themselves, supposing they should be tolerably vigorous in their exertions, will not be equal to the task. At least it will be difficult, if not impracticable, for them to do it. It is to be wished, that such as can be drawn out,

13. This letter, dated Oct. 31, 1777, is in the *Washington Papers*.

may be engaged to serve three Months or two at least (if it can be effected) after their arrival in Camp, and that a mode would be adopted to supply their places with others at the expiration of their term, should the exigency of our affairs require it. A time for their continuance should be fixed, or they will always be uneasy and pushing off; and the longer circumstances will admit it to be, the better. For after the period incurs, for which they come, it will be impossible to retain them a moment. As to the number that should be required, it is difficult to determine. However it is likely it will fall short of the requisition, as it ever has, upon such occasions.

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There is a report prevailing in Camp, which has come thro' several Channels, that a successful expedition has been made upon Rhode Island and 800 Prisoners taken with several pieces of Artillery and a large quantity of Salt. I heartily wish it may be true, but at present it wants confirmation.

Mr. Thompsons letter of the 21 Ult. with its inclosures came to hand yesterday.<sup>14</sup> I join Congress most sincerely, in congratulations on our important success in the surrender of Genl. Burgoyne at the Head of his Forces, and am happy they have received a confirmation of the event from Genl Gates. I have the honor etc.<sup>15</sup>

14. Thomson's letter, dated Oct. 31, 1777 (not 21, as Grayson wrote it), is in the *Washington Papers*.

15. In the writing of William Grayson; the draft is in that of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To JOHN HANCOCK**

Head Quarters, November 2, 1777.

Dr. Sir: Your favor of the 25th I received on Monday Afternoon. You have my warmest wishes for your recovery, and I shall be happy if your recess should be attended with benefits, superior to your most sanguine expectations. Your exertions to promote the General Interest, I am well convinced will be unceasing, and that every measure, the situation of your health will permit you to pursue, will be employed to that end, whether you are in Congress or obliged to remain in the State of Massachusetts.

I have ordered Cornet Buckmer, with 12 Dragoons, to attend you as an escort and to receive your Commands. For this purpose, you will be pleased to retain them, as long as you may consider their attendance necessary. I would willingly have directed a larger Number, but the severe duty the Horse have been obliged to perform, for a long time past, has rendered many of them unfit for Service, to which I must add, that we are under a

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necessity of keeping several considerable patrols of them constantly along the Enemys Lines. These reasons, I trust, will apologize for the Escorts being so small.

I have taken the liberty to trouble you with the inclosed letters, containing a Proclamation respecting

deserters,<sup>26</sup> which I must request the favor of you to put into some safe Channel of Conveyance to the Printers. That for Mr. Loudon I imagine will get to hand by delivering it to Govr. Clinton or Genl. Putnam. Those for Rhode Island and New Hampshire will go safe from the Post Office at New Haven or Hartford.

I have nothing further to add, than to wish you an agreeable Journey and a happy meeting with your lady and friends, and to assure you that, I am etc.<sup>27</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 3, 1777.

Sir: I am favored with yours of the 24th, and am glad to find that such supplies of Lead are upon the way to the different Elaboratories. Lining the flap of the Cartouch [boxes] with painted Canvas will certainly be of Service, considering the badness and thinness of the leather in general; but the greatest preservative to the Cartridges, is a small inside flap of pliant leather, which lays close upon the top of them and not only keeps them dry but from being rubbed. As the Recruits arrive let them be immediately forwarded in to Camp, where I keep a supply of Arms ready to furnish them.

26. See Proclamation, Oct. 24, 1777, *ante*.

27. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

If they want necessaries they should call upon the Cloathier Genl. at Lancaster and endeavour to get what they can.

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I will take the opinion of the General Officers upon the Petition of Colo. Portail and see whether they think his services merit the rank he claims. If you examine the petition attentively, you may remember that Colo. Portail founds his claim upon the promise of Congress. These are the Words,

But in the mean time we were promised, that we should not be left long with the Commissions we then accepted and that the Congress only wanted to have an Opportunity of saying that a Lt Colo. in the royal Corps of French Engineers had been satisfied in this Army with the Rank of Colonel. A Major in said Corps with the rank of Lt. Colonel. A Captain with that of a Major.

If this is so, it ought certainly to carry great weight in the determination. But it is a matter of which I am entirely ignorant, as I never saw Col Portail before he presented his Commission to me in August last. I am &c.<sup>28</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 8, 1777.

Sir: I do myself the honor to inclose you an extract

28. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

of a letter from Major Genl. Dickinson of the 6th instant<sup>32</sup> by which it appears that a reinforcement has sailed from New York [either for] Genl. Howe [or some other expedition]. I have not yet heard whether any of the Troops on their march from the northward have yet crossed the North River, but I hope they will be with me, near as soon as Genl. Howe's reinforcement can arrive at Philadelphia.

There was a heavy firing of Cannon all the day of the 5th. down the river, and in the evening some musquetry was heard, from whence we concluded that an attack had been



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made upon Fort Mifflin. But it turned out to be an attack made by Genl. Varnum, with a 12 and an 18 pounder fixed near Red Bank, [upon] the Enemy's Ships. He thinks he damaged the Somerset of 64 Guns considerably, as she got on ground and was for some time exposed to his fire. The Ships were obliged to quit their Stations and fall lower down. From a variety of accounts and circumstances, I am induced to believe that the Enemy are meditating a grand blow against Fort Mifflin. I have put the place in as good a state of defence as my present numbers will admit, and have directed Genl. Varnum to afford every further assistance in his power. I therefore hope that they will meet a warm reception whenever they make the attempt.

The military Chest is again empty and the Army is unpaid for the months of September and October, besides the drafts that are requisite for the Commissary and Quarter Master General's departments. You will therefore be pleased to direct

32. Dickinson's letter, dated Nov. 6, 1777, is in the *Washington Papers*. The extract is filed with this letter of Washington's in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

that a supply of Cash be sent on as expeditiously as possible.

I fear, from a letter I have lately recd. from Genl. Heath, that no proper measures are taken to put up a Supply of Salt Provisions, for next Campaign, to the Eastward. I have inclosed a Copy of Genl. Heath's letter to Mr. Buchannan the Commy. Genl. of Purchases, and have desired him to have the matter looked into in time, but it is of so much importance to the very existence of the Army, that I think it deserves the attention of Congress. I have the honor etc.<sup>33</sup>

### **To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD**

Head Quarters, White Marsh, November 9, 1777.

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Gentlemen: I yesterday received a Letter from Congress informing me that they had received a Report from your Board with your opinion<sup>45</sup> upon the most probable means of securing the Frigates. Whereupon they came to the following Resolution on the 4th. instant:

Ordered that a Copy of the said report be sent to Genl. Washington for his approbation and if he approve the same that a Detachment of troops be sent to assist in the Construction

33. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. The words in brackets were added by Washington in the draft, which is also in Tilghman's writing.

45. At this point in the draft the following is crossed off: "that it would be better to lighten the Frigates and float them up the River, and by taking their Guns on shore"

and management of the Batteries aforesaid.

Upon the receipt of this I took the opinion of the General Officers who unanimously agreed that, as we had not any men to spare to construct and defend the Works recommended by you, there were no other possible means of effectually securing the Frigates but by scutling them. You will therefore be pleased to have it done in such manner as will render the weighing of them most easy in future and in such depth of Water as will secure them from being damaged by the floating Ice in the Winter. All the other Vessels capable of being converted into Armed Ships should be scutled also. This should be done as speedily as possible and as secretly, for should the Enemy get notice of your intentions, I should not at all wonder at their sending up a force purposely to destroy them or bring them down. You will dispose of the men that were on Board of them as directed in my former. I am  
&ca.<sup>46</sup>

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

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Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 10, 1777.

Sir: I have been duly honored with your Favors of the 4th and 5th Inst. with their several Inclosures. Among those of the former, I found the Resolution you are pleased to allude to, 46. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

respecting your appointment as President.<sup>48</sup> Permit me, Sir, to congratulate you upon this Event, and to assure you, I have the most intire confidence, that I shall experience in you, during your Presidency, the same politeness and attention to the Interest of the States that marked the conduct of your Worthy predecessor.

With respect to the views of the Navy Board for securing the Frigates. The situation of the Army would not admit of a compliance with them, supposing they would Answer the end. I have therefore written to the Board in the most pressing terms to have the Frigates scutled in such way, that they may be raised when it shall be necessary, and that in the mean time, they may not be liable to injury from floating ice. I see no measure so likely to secure them to us and against the Enemy's attempts. I have been extremely fearful they would have possessed and employed them with the Delaware and their [floating] Batteries on the rear of the Gallies and the Fort, while the Ships below attacked in Front. I need not point out the probable consequences of such an Event, they are too obvious.

The Resolves which you request to be communicated to the Army, shall be published in General Orders. The Letters for Commodore Hazlewood &c. [Colos. Greene and Smith and for the president of Delaware state] have been put in a proper channel of Conveyance.

As to the disposition of part of the Northern Army, my Letter of the 1st continued to 3d [Current] contains my Ideas

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48. Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, was chosen President of Congress Nov. 1, 1777, as the successor to President Hancock.

upon the Subject, and those of my General Officers. I shall be sorry, if the measures I have taken on this head, should interfere with, or materially vary from any plans Congress might have had in view. Their proceedings of the 5th, I presume, were founded on a supposition, that the Enemy were still up the North River and garrisoning the Forts they had taken. This not being the case, and all accounts agreeing, that Reinforcements to Genl. Howe are coming from York, I hope the aids, I have required, will be considered expedient and proper. Independant of the latter consideration, I think our exertions and force should be directed to effect Genl Howe's destruction, if it is possible.

Among the various difficulties attending the Army, the adjustment of rank, is not the least. This, owing to the several modes, the several principles that have prevailed in granting Commissions, is involved in great perplexity. The Officers of the Pennsylvania Troops are in much confusion about it. In many instances, those who were junior in rank, from local and other circumstances, have obtained Commissions older in date than those which were granted afterwards to Officers their Superiors before. This, with many other Irregularities has been, and is the cause of great uneasiness; And the precdency of rank so claimed, should not be supported in justice or upon any principle, we find all, having the least pretext for the Title, strenuous to support it and willing to hold a superiority.

I was therefore induced to order a Board of Officers,

to take the matter under [their] consideration.<sup>49</sup> The result [after two or three days deliberation] respecting the Field Officers of this State, I now inclose, and wish Congress to adopt the Regulation which the Board have made; and to transmit me by the earliest opportunity, Commissions dated according to their arrangement; At the same time, It may be proper that there should be a Resolve, vacating the Commissions [which] they now

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have and directing them to be delivered to me. Their attention to this business, I trust, will be immediate. The disputes and jealousies with the Officers require it.

I have inclosed the Memorial of Colo. Portail and the other Engineers for their promotion, referred to me by the Board of War for my sentiments [advice]. As to the Terms, these Gentlemen mention to have been proposed and agreed to, when they first arrived, I know nothing of them more than the Memorial states. In respect to their abilities and knowledge in their profession, I must observe, they have had no great [but little] Opportunity of proving them since they were in our service. However, I have reason to believe, that they have been regularly bred in this important branch of War, and that their talents, which have been hitherto, as it were, dormant, want only a proper occasion to call them forth, in which case I have no doubt they would do themselves honour and the states essential service. It is of great importance too, to consider the practicability of replacing these Gentn. with persons equally qualified, if they should quit the service,

49. The proceedings of this board, dated Aug. 19, 1777, are filed with this letter of Washington's in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

and how indispensible, men of skill in this branch of military science are to every Army. While I am on this subject, I would take the liberty to mention, that I have been well informed, that the Engineer in the Northern Army (Cosieski,<sup>50</sup> I think his name is) is a Gentleman of science and merit. From the character I have had of him he is deserving of notice too.

I would beg leave to mention, that we are in great distress for want of money. This will be more urgent every day, and it is probable, there will be a good deal of pay due the Troops coming to reinforce us. Genl. Putnam writes pressingly for a supply and says he is in a most disagreeable situation for want of it. I must request the attention of Congress to this Subject.

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Your favor of the 7th. came to hand this morning. I shall pay proper attention to the Inclosures. The Rank of the Officers of Cavalry, I will attempt to have settled, as soon as circumstances will admit.

I have nothing very interesting to communicate. The Enemy have lost One of their New floating Batteries. It sunk in a little time after it was launched. There has been a Canonade to day; it still continues. I do not know the occasion, but imagine, it is between the Ships and Gallies. I have the honor &ca.<sup>51</sup>

50. Thaddeus Kosciuszko had been appointed a colonel of Engineers in the Continental Army Oct. 18, 1776. He was brevetted a brigadier general in 1783.

51. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets are in the draft, which is also by Harrison, but do not appear in the letter sent.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp near White Marsh, November 11, 1777.

Sir: The condition of the Army for want of Cloaths and Blankets, and the little prospect we have of obtaining relief according to the information I have received from the Board of War, occasion me to trouble you at this time. The mode of seizing and forcing supplies from the Inhabitants, I fear, would prove very inadequate to the demands, while it would certainly imbitter the minds of the People, and excite perhaps a hurtful jealousy against the Army. I have had Officers out for the purpose of purchasing and making voluntary collections of necessaries and in a few instances, more coercive measures have been exercised. But all these have proved of little avail. Our distresses still continue and are becoming greater. I would therefore humbly submit it to the consideration of Congress, whether it may not be expedient for them to address the Several Legislative and executive Powers of the states, on this subject, as early as possible, and in the most urgent Terms. It appears to me, If they were to appoint, under the Authority of Congress, proper active Agents, that

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many necessaries might be procured, in addition to those employed<sup>53</sup> on Public account. Besides this, I think, the exigency of our affairs requires, that they should resolve on an immediate assessment to be made

53. The draft has "imported."

on the Inhabitants. If these modes were adopted, considerable aids might be derived, and in a way much less exceptionable, than that of seizing by the Army. The Assemblies in many states, I beleive are now sitting, and I have no doubt upon a requisition by Congress, but they will give attention to the measure.

Inclosed you will receive a Copy of a Letter from Genl. Putnam<sup>54</sup> which came to hand to day. You will find his and Governor Clinton's opinion, respecting the Fortifications necessary to be made for the security of the North River. As soon as I heard that Warner's Militia were coming down to reinforce me, I immediately wrote to countermand them, and directed that they should be retained to carry on the necessary works during the time they are to serve. My Letter on this subject was on the 9th. Instant. As to the other Troops, the propriety of bringing them here, I believe is not to be questioned. We are told through various Channels, that Sir Henry Clinton is coming round with all the force that can be possibly spared from New York, and it is said that those on Staten Island are withdrawn. It is added also, that the Inhabitants of the former are greatly alarmed and disgusted, and that Genl. Tryon is calling in the Militia of Long Island for the defence of the City. Genl. Putnam's Letter will also evince the necessity there is for a large and immediate supply of money being sent to the Paymaster Genl.

I have also the Honor to transmit you a Copy of a Report by a Board of Genl. Officers on the subject of Rations which I submit

54. Putnam's letter, dated Nov. 7, 1777, is in the *Washington Papers*.

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to the consideration of Congress. The establishment and Regulations, which they propose, appear to me to be just and necessary, supposing the Commissary's estimate to be right, which I presume is the case from the exorbitant price which has been and is now paid for every species of Provision. The necessity of an alteration in the former Value, has been long urged by many Officers and for want of it several, I believe, have left the service.<sup>55</sup> I have the Honor etc.

P.S. By advices just received, 38 Transports have arrived in Delaware with Troops; they were as high up as Reedy Island yesterday, I suppose they are from New York. The Memorial of Colonel Portail and the other Engineers, omitted to be inclosed in my Letter of yesterday, is now transmitted.

Notwithstanding the measures I have ventured to recommend on the subject of Cloathing, I shall pursue every means in my power, that will contribute to procure a Supply. [by sending and keeping Officers in different States]<sup>56</sup>

55. The minutes of this board, undated, are filed in the *Washington Papers* at the end of the year 1777. The board recommended that the ration be 1¼ pounds of beef, or 1 pound of pork or 1¼ pounds of salt fish; 1¼, pounds of flour, or soft bread, or 1 pound of hard bread; one-half gill of rum or whisky per day in lieu of beer; one-half pint of rice, or 1 pint of Indian meal per week; 3 pounds of candles to 100 men per week and soap agreeable to the late regulation of Congress. The price of this ration, exclusive of soap and candles, was estimated at 3 shillings 4 pence.

56. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. The phrase in brackets in the P.S. is in the draft but not in the letter sent.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Camp at White Marsh, November 11, 1777.



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Sir: I have now before me your Favors of the 6th and 7th Instant. The inconveniences, arising from the allowance of Substitutes, are severely felt and I fear they will increase. I will attempt some mode to detect deserters, now in Service, under that denomination. The Public Arms furnished the Virginia Militia, were directed to be put into the hands of a number belonging to this state who joined General Potter at the time of their dismissal; and whatever exceeded this supply, the Officers were enjoined to have deposited at Lancaster in their Return home. This I hope has been done.

I am extremely sorry to find, we have no prospect of obtaining Supplies of Cloathing, except by forcing them from the Inhabitants. Such a procedure, I fear, would not relieve our wants, and at the same time would greatly distress the people and imbitter their minds. I have had Several Officers employed in this State in collecting, but the quantities gained are trifling. There are some out now upon the business. It appears to me, since our public Imports are so small and precarious, owing to the numerous fleet, I presume, which lines our Coast, that no measure will be more likely to give us aid, than the establishing of proper Agents in each State, to buy every species of Cloathing they possibly can for the Army. The Supplies derived from hence,

may be of infinite advantage and in addition to those immediately imported by Congress, will extend, considerably to lessen our Wants. The Agents I think should be active, suitable Men, appointed by the Legislative or Executive Powers of the respective States. I have addressed Congress upon the Subject. I am etc.<sup>57</sup>

### **To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD**

Head Quarters, November 12, 1777.

Gentlemen: I have your favr. of the 10th and am only sorry that I did not sooner know my request of Sinking the Frigates had been complied with. The delay of the Resolve of Congress from the time you first applied for their advice, was what led me into a Mistake,

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and I am obliged to you for the genteel manner in which you excuse me. I am perfectly satisfied with the Measures which you have taken, to secure the Shipping and desire when you have no further occasion for the men that they may be disposed of as directed in my former Letters. I am etc.<sup>70</sup>

57. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

70. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 17, 1777.

Sir: I am sorry to inform you, that Fort Mifflin was evacuated the night before last, after a defence which does credit to the American Arms, and will ever reflect the highest honor upon the Officers and Men of the Garrison. The Works were entirely beat down, every piece of Cannon dismounted, and one of the Enemy's Ships so near, that she threw Grenades into the fort and killed the Men upon the platforms from her tops, before they quitted the Island. This Ship had been cut down for the purpose, and so constructed that she made but a small draft of Water, and was by these means, warped in between Fort Mifflin and the Province Island. Some complaints are made that the Captains of the Gallies did not sufficiently exert themselves to drive this Vessel from her Station, but I shall not determine any thing upon the matter, till a proper inquiry is made

Nothing in the Course of this Campaign, has taken up so much of the attention and consideration of myself and all the General Officers, as the possibility of giving a further relief to Fort Mifflin, than what we had already afforded. Such a Garrison was thrown into it, as has been found by experience, capable of defending it, to the last extremity; and Red Bank, which was deemed essentially necessary not only for the purpose of keeping

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open the communication, but of annoying the Enemy's Ships and covering our own Fleet, has been possessed by a considerable detachment from this Army. The only remaining and practicable mode of giving relief to the Fort, was, by dislodging the Enemy from Province Island, from whence they kept up an incessant fire: But this, from the Situation of the Ground, was not to be attempted with any degree of safety to the attacking party, without the whole or a considerable part of the Army should be removed to the West Side of Schuylkill, to support and cover it. To account for this, you must be made acquainted with the nature of the ground. In order to have made the attack upon Province Island, the party destined for that Service, (which should have been at least 1500) must have marched clown the Chester Road as far as the Bell Inn, near Derby, and thence, turning towards Delaware, must have proceeded about four Miles further, thro' a neck of land, to the Island. The Enemy have a Bridge at the middle ferry upon Schuylkill, which is but four Miles from the Bell Inn, consequently, by throwing a Body of Men over that Bridge, upon the first discovery of our design, and Marching down to the Bell, they would have effectually cut off our detachment upon their return. It is true, the covering party might have consisted of a less number than the whole Army, but then, those remaining on this side of the River would have been too few, to have been intrusted with all the Artillery and Stores of the Army, within twelve Miles

of the Enemy. There were many and very forcible Reasons against a total Remove to the West Side of Schuylkill. Leaving all our Stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allen Town uncovered, and abandoning several of our Hospitals within reach of the Enemy first presented themselves. Another, and in my opinion a more weighty reason than either of the preceeding, was the importance of supporting the post at Red Bank, upon which, that of Fort Mifflin in a great measure depended, as thro' it, we sent in Supplies of Men, provision and Ammunition. The Enemy, sensible of this, endeavoured to dislodge us from Red Bank on the 22d last month, which, as Congress have been informed, cost them 400 Men. Now, had our Army been upon the West Side of Schuylkill, they might, without any danger of an attack upon their lines, have thrown over so considerable a force into Jersey,

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that they might have overpowered the Garrison, and by making themselves masters of it, have reduced Fort Mifflin by famine or want of ammunition. Thus we should, in all probability, have lost both posts by one Stroke. They might also, by taking possession of the fords upon Schuylkill, have rendered the Junction of our northern reinforcements with us a very difficult if not an impracticable matter, and should any accident have happened to them, we should have stood a very poor chance of looking Genl. Howe in the face, thro' the Winter, with an inferior Army. We should finally, have thrown the Army into such a situation, that we must inevitably have drawn on a general Engagement, before our Reinforcements arrived, which, considering our disparity of Numbers, would probably have ended with the most

disagreeable Consequences.

It was therefore determined, a few days ago, to wait the arrival of the Reinforcement from the Northward, before any alteration could safely be made in the disposition of the Army, and I was not without hopes, that the Fort would have held out till that time. That we might then have moved without endangering the Stores, I had given orders for the removal of them from the places before mentioned, to Lebanon and other places in Lancaster County, which is, at any rate, more safe and convenient than where they were.

As to keeping possession of Red Bank and thereby still preventing the Enemy from weighing the Chevaux de frize before the Frost obliges their Ships to quit the River, has become a matter of the greatest importance; I have determined to send down Genl. St. Clair, Genl. Knox, and Baron Kalb to take a view of the Ground, and to endeavour to form a Judgment of the most probable means of securing it. They will, at the same time, see how far it is possible for our fleet to keep their Station since the loss of Fort Mifflin, and also make the proper inquiry into the Conduct of the Captains of the Galleys, mentioned in the former part of this letter.

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I am informed that it is matter of amazement, and that reflections have been thrown out against this Army, for not being more active and enterprizing than, in

the opinion of some, they ought to have been. If the charge is just, the best way to account for it, will be to [refer you to the returns of our Strength and those which I can produce of the Enemy, and to] the inclosed Abstract of the Cloathing now actually wanting for the Army, and then I think the wonder will be, how they keep the field at all, in Tents, at this Season of the Year. What Stock the Cloathier General has to supply this demand, or what are his prospects, he himself will inform you, as I have directed him to go to York Town to lay these matters before Congress. There are besides, most of those in the Hospitals more bare than those in the Field. Many remain there, for want of Cloaths only.

Several General Officers, unable to procure Cloathing in the common line, have employed Agents to purchase up what could be found in different parts of the Country. Genl. Wayne among others has employed Mr. Zantzinger<sup>5</sup> of Lancaster, who has purchased to the Amount of, £4500, for which he desires a draft upon the Treasury Board. Inclosed you have copy of his letter. I am not clear whether this application should properly be made to the Treasury or the Cloathier General, who should charge the money to the Regiments for whom the Cloaths are, as so much advanced to them. If the latter should appear the most proper mode, I will order it to be done.

I am anxiously waiting the arrival of the Troops from the Northward, who ought, from the time they have had my orders, to have been here before this. Colo. Hamilton, one of my Aids, is up the North River doing all he can to push them forward, but he

5. Paul Zantzinger.

writes me that he finds many unaccountable delays thrown in his way. However I am in hopes that many days will not elapse before a Brigade or two at least arrive. [The want of these Troops has embarrassed all my measures exceedingly.]

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November 18.

Your dispatches of the 13th and 14th have this Moment come to hand; they shall be attended to and answered in my next. I have the honor to be, etc.<sup>6</sup>

### To FRANCIS HOPKINSON

Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 21, 1777.

Sir: I am favoured with yours of the 14th. inclosing a letter for the Revd. Mr. Duché.<sup>33</sup> I will endeavour to forward it to him, but I imagine it will never be permitted to reach his hands.

I confess to you, that I was not more surprised than concerned at receiving so extraordinary a Letter from Mr. Duché, of whom I had entertained the most favourable opinion, and I am still willing to suppose, that it was rather dictated

6. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. In the draft, also by Tilghman, the words in brackets were added by Washington.

33. Hopkinson's letter to Duché, who was his brother-in-law, is dated November 14 and is printed, in part, in *Life and Works of Hopkinson*, by George E. Hastings (Chicago, 1926): "Words cannot express the Grief and Consternation that wounded my Soul at the sight of this fatal Performance.... I could go thro' this extraordinary Letter and point out to you the Truth distorted in every leading Part; But the World will doubtless do this with a Severity that must be Daggers to the Sensibilities of your Heart. Read that Letter over again: and, if possible, divest yourself of the Fears and Influences, whatever they were, that induced you to pen it ... you have by a vain and weak Effort attempted the Integrity of one whose Virtue is impregnable to the Assaults of Fear or Flattery; whose Judgment needed not your Information and who, I am sure, would have resigned his Charge the Moment he found it likely to lead him out of the Paths of Virtue and Honour.... And with whom would you have him negotiate. Are they not those who, without the Sanction of any civil, moral or

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religious Right, have come 3000 Miles to destroy our Peace and Property: to lay waste to *your* native Country with Fire and Sword and cruelly murther its Inhabitants. Look for their Justice and Honour, in the Gaols of New York and Philada. and in your own Potter's Field. ...”

by his fears than by his real sentiments; but I very much doubt whether the great numbers of respectable Characters, in the State and Army, on whom he has bestowed the most unprovoked and unmerited abuse will ever attribute it to the same Cause, or forgive the Man who has artfully endeavoured to engage me to Sacrifice them to purchase my own safety.

I never intended to have made the letter more public than by laying it before Congress. I thought this a duty which I owed to myself, for had any accident have happened to the Army intrusted to my command, and it had ever afterwards have appeared that such a letter had been wrote to and received by me, might it not have been said that I had betrayed my Country? and would not such a correspondence, if kept a secret, have given good Grounds for the suspicion?

I thank you for the favourable sentiments which you are pleased to express of me, and I hope no act of mine will ever induce you to alter them. I am etc.<sup>34</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, November 23, 1777.

Sir: I have been duly honored with your Favors of the

34. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. (See Washington's letter to Francis Hopkinson, Jan. 27, 1778, *post.*)

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13 and 19 Instant with their Inclosures. I am well assured Congress have not been inattentive to the Necessities of the Army, and that the deficiency in our Supplies, particularly in the Article of cloathing has arisen from the difficulty of importing on account of the Numerous Fleet, which line our Coast. However, I am persuaded that considerable relief might be drawn from the different States, were they to exert themselves properly. This I hope will be the case, as soon as they receive the pressing recommendations of Congress upon the Subject.

It has been the unvaried custom of the Enemy, from the commencement of the present Contest, to try every Artifice and device to delude the People. The Message sent thro' John Brown was calculated for this end.<sup>45</sup> I am surprised Mr. Willing<sup>46</sup> should suffer himself to be imposed on by such flimsy measures. He knows that there is a plain, obvious way for Genl and Lord Howe to communicate any proposals they wish to make to Congress, without the intervention of a second and third hand. But this would not suit their views. I am sorry that Mr. Brown should have been the Bearer of the Message, as from the character I have had of him, he is a worthy, well disposed Man. It has been frequently mentioned, that he had interested himself much in behalf of our Prisoners; and had afforded them every relief and comfort his circumstances would allow him to give.

I have been endeavouring to effect an Exchange

45. Brown had come out from Philadelphia and traveled through a large part of Pennsylvania before returning to the city. He “is again come out without a flag or pass from any general or officer in the service of the United States, pretending that he is charged with a verbal message to Congress from General Howe.” Deeming such conduct “grounds of suspicion that he is employed by the enemy for purposes inimical to these states,” Congress ordered his arrest. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Nov. 18, 1777.)

46. Thomas Willing.



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of prisoners, from principles of justice and from motives of humanity; but at present I have no prospect of it. Yet Genl. Howe has assured Our Officers, it was his wish, and if it could not be done, that he should readily agree to their release on parole. The Inclosed Copies of my Letters and his Answer will shew Congress what has passed between us upon that subject, and at the same time, that I had remonstrated against the severe and cruel treatment of the Prisoners and proposed the Plan of sending in a Suitable person to inquire into the Facts, before the receipt of their Resolution. Their sufferings, I am persuaded, have been great and shocking to Humanity. (I have called upon Genl. Howe for redress and an explicit answer to my Letter of the 14th. If I do not receive One by to morrow night, with the most positive and satisfactory assurances, that a proper conduct shall be observed towards them in future, we must retaliate. However much we wish to avoid Severity and measures that bears the smallest appearance of rigour, or inhumanity.)

Inclosed you will receive a List of Sundry Officers, who have been cashiered since the Action of the 4th. Ultio. I flatter myself, that these examples, will involve many favorable and beneficial consequences. Besides these there were many more brought to trial who were acquitted. Among them Genl. Maxwell and Genl. Wayne. The former for charges against him while he commanded the Light Troops. The latter for charges against his conduct, in the Attack made on his division in the Night

of the 20th of September. The result of the Court of Inquiry against Genl. Wayne, not intirely exempting him from censure in his own Opinion, he requested a Court Martial and upon a full and minute investigation of the charges against him, he was honourably acquitted and in terms of high respect.

I am sorry to inform Congress, that the Enemy are now in possession of All the Water defences. Fort Mifflin and that at Red Bank mutually depended on each Other for support, and the reduction of the former made the tenure of the latter extremely precarious, if not impracticable. After the loss of Fort Mifflin, it was found Red Bank could derive no advantages from the Gallies and Armed Vessels (they could not maintain their Station)

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and in case of Investiture, the Garrison could have no Supplies, no retreat, nor any hope of relief, but such as might arise from a Superior Force acting without on the rear of the Enemy and dislodging them. Under these circumstances, the Garrison was obliged to evacuate it on the night of the 20th Inst., on the approach of Lord Cornwallis, who had crossed the River from Chester with a Detachment, supposed to be about Two Thousand Men and formed a junction with the Troops lately arrived from New York and those that had been landed before at Billingsport. From Genl. Varnum's Account, I have reason to hope, that we saved Most of the Stores, except a few Heavy Cannon, however I cannot be particular in this instance. I am also to add, from the intelligence I have received, that

most, if not All the Armed Vessels have been burnt by our own people, except the Gallies, One Brig and Two Sloops, which are said to have run by the City. How far this might be founded in necessity, I am not able to determine; but I suppose it was done under that Idea and an apprehension of their falling into the Enemy's hands, if they attempted to pass up the River. Upon the first information I had of Lord Cornwallis's movement, I detached Genl Huntington's Brigade to join Genl Varnum and as soon as possible Genl. Greene with his division, hoping that these with Glover's Brigade, which was on the march thro' Jersey and which I directed to file off to the left for the same purpose, and with such Militia as could be collected, would be able to defeat the Enemy's design and to preserve the Fort. But they were so rapid in their advance, that our Troops could not form a junction and arrive in time to succour the Garrison, which obliged them to withdraw. Genl Greene is still in Jersey and when Glover's Brigade joins him, if an Attack can be made on Lord Cornwallis with a prospect of success, I am persuaded it will be done. About a Hundred and Seventy of Morgans Corps are also gone to reinforce him.

Genls. Poor and Paterson with their Brigades and Colo Bailey with Learned's are now in Camp. The last arrived on Friday Evening. The Other two in the course of Yesterday. I have not yet obtained Returns of their strength but from the accounts of the Officers, they

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will amount in the whole to Twenty three or Twenty four Hundred rank and file. But I find many of them are very deficient in the Articles of Shoes, Stockings, Breeches

and Blankets. Besides these, about 350 Men, detachments from Lee's Jackson's and Henley's Regiments, have joined me.

Yesterday Evening the Enemy burnt several Houses in the Neighbourhood of Philadelphia, and they have committed the most wanton spoil in many Others. I have the honor to be etc.<sup>47</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, November 26–27, 1777.

Sir: I was yesterday Morning honored with your Favors of the 22d Inst.<sup>55</sup> I wish the measures Congress have adopted may effectually suppress the disturbances in the Western Department.<sup>56</sup> Should they prove Successful and the Savages and wicked deluded Inhabitants receive a severe check, it is probable they will not be induced again to take a part against us, or at least for some considerable time. Colo Crawford set out yesterday Evening and will be with Congress, I expect, in the course of Two or three Days to take their Commands.

I was much obliged by the Foreign intelligence you were pleased to transmit me. It is agreeable and interesting

47. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

55. The letter from the President of Congress is inadvertently dated November 28 in the "President's Letter Book."

56. This letter inclosed the resolves of Congress of November 20, appointing three commissioners to repair to Fort Pitt to investigate the frontier troubles, engage the

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Delawares and Shawanese Indians in the friendship and services of the United States, aid in every military activity, and arrange an expedition against Detroit. Also Washington was requested to send Col. William Crawford to Pittsburgh to act under General Hand.

and I heartily wish there may be an early declaration of Hostilities between France and Britain. From these advices, things seem to be getting in a proper train for it, and it is not easily to be conceived, that it can be much longer delayed. However, our expectations have not been answered in this instance, and they may yet be held in suspense. The Political reasons that lead to delay, on the part of France, I do not perfectly understand: As to Britain, her honor is lost in the Contest with us, and the most indignant insults will scarcely be able to draw her attention from her present pursuits. The account of Mr. Lee having effected the purposes of his embassy at the Court of Berlin, is of great importance, if it be true. In such case, administration however desirous they may be, will probably be disappointed in their schemes of further mercenary aids against us.<sup>57</sup>

I must take the liberty to request the decision of Congress on the case of the Nine First raised Virginia Regiments as early as circumstances will permit. If the plan proposed for reinlisting them is Judged expedient, one capital inducement to that end suggested by the Officers, will cease, if it is longer delayed. It is a matter of considerable importance, and of which I wish to be satisfied as soon as possible. I should also be happy in their determination respecting the Marquis de la Fayette. He is more and more solicitous to be in actual service, and is pressing in his applications for a Command. I ventured before, to submit my Sentiments upon the measure, and I still fear a refusal will not only induce him to return in disgust, but may involve some unfavorable

57. Arthur Lee's mission to Berlin accomplished little, though he put the best face possible upon it Some of his letters on the subject are printed in Sparks's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, 2, 65. 68, 70. 76, 87, 103, and 197. Great

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Britain's failure to obtain mercenary troops from Russia was due to other causes than Lee's activity, and reenforcements from Germany continued to go to America.

consequences. There are now some vacant Divisions in the Army, to one of which he may be appointed, if it should be the pleasure of Congress.

I am convinced he possesses a large share of that Military ardor, which generally characterises the Nobility of his Country. He went to Jersey with Genl Greene and I find he has not been inactive there. This you will perceive by the following Extract from a letter just received from Genl Greene.

The Marquis with about 400 Militia and the Rifle Corps, attacked the Enemy's Picket last Evening, killed about 20, wounded many more and took about 20 Prisoners. The Marquis is charmed with the spirited behaviour of the Militia and Rifle Corps. They drove the Enemy above half a Mile and kept the ground untill dark. The Enemy's Picket consisted of about 300 and were reinforced during the skirmish. The Marquis is determined to be in the way of danger.<sup>58</sup>

By a Letter from Genl. Howe to General Burgoyne which

58. Greene's letter, dated Nov, 26, 1777, from which this extract was taken, is in the *Washington Papers*.

passed thro' my hands, he hinted that liberty might probably be granted for the Prisoners to embark at Rhode Island or some part of the sound. This Indulgence appearing to me inadmissible, I immediately wrote to Genl. Heath to prevent him giving the least countenance to the measure in case it should be requested, and also to the Council of Massachusetts State and Genl. Gates, lest he should extend his applications to them. The reasons I am persuaded will at once occur to Congress for my conduct in this instance, as well as Genl. Howe's; and I have been induced to mention it here on a supposition that Genl. Burgoyne may address them on the subject. If the embarkation is confined

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to Boston, it is likely that it will not take place before some time in the Spring, or at least till towards the end of February, whereas if it were allowed at either of the other places, it might be made this Month or the beginning of next and the Troops arrive in Britain by the Month of January. A circumstance of great importance to us, as the moment they get there, the most scrupulous and virtuous observance of the Convention, will Justify the Ministry in placing them in Garrison and sending others out to reinforce Genl. Howe, or upon any other expedition they may think proper to undertake against us. Besides, compelling their Transports to perform a long coasting voyage, at a tempestuous season, may bring on the loss of many and be the means of deferring the embarkation for a long time.

I must request you to transmit me a Number of blank Commissions as soon as you have an opportunity to do it. There are several vacancies yet to fill, and the officers entitled to them are anxious to be appointed. The Commissions I want should be under your signature and not Mr. Hancock's. I mention this, lest you should send any of the latter that might remain. Those signed by you will be competent to all cases. Those by Mr. Hancock only to such as happened during his Presidency and of those I now have some.

November 27.

Inclosed you will receive a Copy of Genl. Howe's Letter in

answer to mine of the 14th and 23d which only came to hand last night, and at an Instant when I was giving the Commissary of Prisoners instructions, forthwith to confine a number of the Officers in our hands and to put the Privates under very different restrictions from those they have been used to. I am in hopes the treatment of ours will be much better in future. Mr. Boudinot will immediately take Measures for releasing the Officers on Parole that we may releive an equal number of ours. I should have been happy to have effected a Genl. Exchange or a partial one, but Genl. Howe will not upon any terms but those he has ever insisted upon.

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The Enemy have got up several of their Ships to the City. It is likely they have found a passage through the Chevaux de frize or they may have removed one of them. I have the honor etc.<sup>59</sup>

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Whitemarsh, November 27, 1777.

Sir: I was duly favored with yours of the 11th Inst. The inattention of the Officers to the dress of their Men has been, I believe,

<sup>59</sup>. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

one principal Cause of their present bareness and want of Cloathing. I have repeatedly given positive orders, that such a list of necessaries as you call a Rag Roll, should be kept and the Articles Weekly inspected; but that like too many other wholesome Regulations, has generally passed unnoticed and until the Officers are taught, by a course of regular discipline. to pay strict obedience to *General* Orders, many things must and will remain undone that ought to be done; for it is impossible for me to see them carried into execution personally. That I am endeavouring to reform the Army, will appear by the great number of severe sentences of Courts Martial that have lately passed. But I very much fear, that many valuable Officers will leave the service at the end of the Campaign; some, because the excessive high price of every Article of life, renders it impossible to live upon their pay alone, and others, on account of that lavish distribution of high military Rank to persons upon the Staff of the Army, which sets them above their duty and makes a Man of Spirit look upon any Commission under the degree of a field Officer with Contempt. Altho' as I have before said, great fault is to be laid upon the Carelessness of the Officers, yet allowance is to be made for the ordinary quality of a great deal of the Cloathing. I assure you many of the Regiments have fairly worn out their Uniforms, and that is the Reason why Suits are again called for, for those who have been supplied before.

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We shall never proceed regularly in the Cloathing of our Men until we have a sufficient Stock to deliver out their yearly

allowance at one time. They will then perhaps take more care of what they get, as they will know, that anything further, will certainly be deducted from their pay. But at present it is difficult to determine, whether many of them have or have not had the quantity allowed by Congress.

I can only hope that time and experience, which brings all things to perfection will at length have the desired effect upon the Manners of our Army. I can only say, that no exertions of Mine have or shall be wanting to forward this work. I am &ca.63

### **To THE CONTINENTAL NAVY BOARD**

Head Quarters, November 29, 1777.

Gentn.: I am favored with yours of the 20th. I see no reason for changing my former opinion, in respect to Sinking the frigates to insure their safety. If they are weighed again and converted into Barracks for the seamen, they must be brought near the Shore and when the frost sets in, they cannot be sunk, should the Enemy approach at such time. I however leave the matter to your judgment.

The Hulls of the Vessels will be all that are

63. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

necessary for Barracks, if you should determine to put them to that use. The Sails, Rigging and all other stores of them and the Vessels that have been burn't, should be removed to some distance from the Water Side. I am, etc.75

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**



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Head Quarters, White Marsh, December 1, 1777.

Sir: On Saturday I had the Honor to receive your Favor of the 26th Ult<sup>o</sup>. with its Inclosures.

The Resolve of the 25th, I have published in Orders,<sup>82</sup> agreeable to directions, and shall be happy, if Congress can fall upon measures to render the situation of the Officers and Soldiery more eligible, than what it now is. At present it is truly distressing, and unless some means can be devised to support them more comfortably, we shall have to apprehend the most alarming consequences. The Officers, or at least a large proportion of them, as well as the Men, are in a most disagreeable condition as to Cloathing, and without any certain prospect of relief; And what is still more painful, if perchance they have an Opportunity of purchasing, which is seldom the case, they have the Mortification to find themselves totally incompetent to it, from the depreciation of our

75. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

82. See General Orders, Nov. 30, 1776, ante.

Money and the exorbitant price demanded for All Articles in this way. This is the source of great uneasiness, of indifference to the Service and of repeated, I may say daily, applications to leave it, and these too, by as good Officers as are in the American line. In respect to promotions for merit and intrepidity, I would beg leave to observe, that tho' these are proper considerations to found them upon, yet they should be made with the greatest caution and attention, and only in cases of the most eminent and distinguish'd services. Every promotion or rise out of the common course cannot fail to excite uneasiness in a greater or lesser degree, and Nothing will reconcile them to the Army at large and particularly the Officers more immediately affected by them, but where the causes are known and acknowledged. This I mention from my wishes to promote the Public interest; from my knowing that Harmony is essential to this end, and from no other motives whatever.

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Before the receipt of your Favor, I do not recollect to have heard of John Limper's case. His Brother has not been with me; As soon as he arrives, I shall give directions for him to be released from his present confinement and to be forwarded to Cecil County.

I have nothing material to inform you of. Lord Cornwallis and the Detachment under his command, mentioned in my last, returned from Jersey on Thursday. We had reason to expect an Attack since from our advices from

the City, but have been disappointed. Genl Greene has also joined me, with all the Troops that were with him, except Huntington's Brigade, which will be in to day. I have the honor to be etc.<sup>83</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Qurs., White Marsh, December 10, 1777.

Sir: I have the honor to inform you, that in the course of last Week from a variety of intelligence I had reason to expect that General Howe was preparing to give us a general Action. Accordingly on Thursday night he moved from the City with all his Force, except a very inconsiderable part left in his Lines and Redoubts, and appeared the next Morning on Chesnut Hill, in front of, and about three miles distant from our Right wing. As soon as their possition was discovered, the Pennsylvania Militia were ordered from our Right to skirmish with their Light, advanced parties, and I am sorry to mention, that Brigadr. Genl. Irvine, who led them on, had the misfortune to be wounded and to be made prisoner. Nothing more occurred on that day. On Friday night the Enemy changed their Ground and moved

83. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

to our left within a mile of our line, where they remained quiet and advantageously posted the whole of the next day. On Sunday they inclined still further to our left, and from every

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appearance, there was reason to apprehend they were determined on an Action. In this movement their advanced and flanking parties were warmly attacked by Colo. Morgan and his Corps, and also by the Maryland Militia under Colo. Gist. Their loss I cannot ascertain, but I am informed it was considerable, having regard to the number of the Corps who engaged them. About Sun set, after various marches and countermarches they halted, and I still supposed from their disposition and preceding Manœuvres, that they would attack us in the Night or early the next morning, but in this I was mistaken. On Monday afternoon, they began to move again and instead of advancing filed off from their Right, and the first certain account that I could obtain of their intentions was, that they were in full March towards Philadelphia by Two or Three Routes. I immediately detached light parties after them to fall upon their Rear, but they were not able to come up with them. The Enemy's loss, as I have observed, I cannot ascertain. One account from the City is, that Five hundred wounded had been sent in; Another is that Eighty two Waggon's had gone in with Men in this situation. These I fear are both exaggerated and not to be depended upon. We lost Twenty Seven Men in Morgans Corps in killed and wounded, besides

Major Morris,<sup>4</sup> a Brave and gallant Officer, who is among the latter. Of the Maryland Militia, there were also Sixteen or Seventeen wounded. I have not received further Returns yet. I sincerely wish, that they had made an Attack; the Issue in all probability, from the disposition of our Troops and the strong situation of our Camp, would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time I must add that reason, prudence, and every principle of policy, forbid us quitting our post to attack them. Nothing but Success would have justified the measure, and this could not be expected from their position.

The constant attention and watching I was obliged to give the Enemy's movements, would not allow me to write before, and this I believe was the less material, as I have reason to think your Committee,<sup>5</sup> who were in Camp most of the time, and who are now here, transmitted an Account of such Occurrences, as they deemed important in any degree. The first cause too, Sir, and my Engagements with the Committee previous to the coming out of the Enemy, will, I trust, sufficiently apologize for my not acknowledging before, the

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honor of your favors of the 30th Ult. and 1st Inst. which came to hand in due order and time. I am &ca.6

4. Maj. Joseph Morris, of the First New Jersey Regiment.

5. On November 28 Congress unanimously resolved that a committee of three be appointed to repair to headquarters and "in a private confidential consultation with General Washington, to consider of the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter's campaign with vigour and success, an object which Congress has much at heart." After conferring with the Commander in Chief the committee came to the "determination" that an assault upon Philadelphia was inadvisable; that no militia reinforcements of any consequence were to be relied upon; that the proper method of reinforcing the Army should be determined by Congress and that the Army should go into winter quarters at such place as would "afford supplies of provision, Wood Water and Forage, be secure from a surprise and best calculated for covering the Country from the Ravages of the Enemy, and prevent their collecting Recruits and supplies for their Army, as well as afford comfortable Quarters for the Officers and Soldiers."

A copy of this determination was inclosed in a letter (December 10) from the committee to Washington and discloses that the committee conferred with the Commander in Chief and a council of the general officers before coming to the foregoing determination. In that letter the committee noted that "Among the many reasons offered against a Winters Campaign we were sorry to observe one of the most prevalent was a general discontent in the Army and especially among the Officers. These discontents are ascribed to various causes and we doubt not many of them are well founded and deserve particular attention, and in the course of the present Winter, will be taken into consideration by Congress, and we hope effectually remedied. That a reform may take place in the army, and proper discipline be introduced, we wish to see the Military placed on such a footing as may make a Commisison a desirable object to the Officer, and his Rank preserved from degradation and contempt; for these purposes we intend to recommend to Congress: That an half

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pay establishment be formed and adopted in the American Service. That a pensionary establishment take place in favour of Officers' Widows. That a New regulation of Rank, confining it as far as possible to the line of the Army be adopted. That an equitable mode of paying for *back* rations be ordered. Should these several regulations be approved and established by Congress (and we have reason to suppose they will) We trust the prevailing discontents will subside and a Spirit of emulation, take place among the Gentlemen of the Army to promote the public service and introduce that order and discipline amongst the Troops so essential to the Military Character. As a further inducement the Committe have it also in Contemplation to propose in Congress that the Officers be permitted to dispose of their Commissions under such regulations as may render the measure eligible." A further determination of the committee was that the Army needed to be reenforced "before the intended Enterprise" against Philadelphia "can be carried into execution."

The committee's letter with a copy of its "determination" is in the *Washington Papers*.

6. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Gulf Creek, December 14, 1777.

Sir: Your several favors of the 28th November and 4th and 5th instants came duly to hand; but the constant motion which the Army has been in, since the Receipt of them, has prevented me from answering them before this time.

Nothing but the absolute necessity which the Army lay under for want of Cloathing induced me to send out Officers to make Collections; the Cloathier General represented it to me as impossible for him to procure what Articles were in the Hands of private Persons and I therefore, by Virtue of the Powers with which I was vested by Congress, granted Warrants to different Officers to impress what the holders would not willingly part with; but I, at the same time, directed them to give orders upon the Cloathier General, to be paid for at a

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Reasonable rate. Since the State of Pennsylvania have undertaken to collect what things are proper for the Army by Commissioners of their own. I have recalled all the Officers sent out by me.

I shall direct Genl. Armstrong who remains upon the East side of Schuylkill, to endeavour to find out what Leather is tanned in and about Germantown and to have it removed. I am informed that it will be needless to remove

what is half tanned, for if it freezes it will be spoiled.

I have directed the Muster Master Genl. to take the first opportunity of mustering Colo Nicola's Corps of Invalids, which he promises to do. Doctor Shippin has requested me, to allot them to guard the Hospitals, and if there is no other duty assigned to them I dont know how they can be better employed.

Colo Richardson has gone to Maryland for the benefit of his health and I am constrained to mention the impossibility of sparing the Battalion at present, most of the Men of the Nine eldest Virginia Regiments whose times would have expired in February have been permitted to go home upon Furlough, to induce them to reinlist for the War, upon the common Terms and a considerable Number of the Troops of Connecticut and Massachusetts, who were drafted for eight Months will leave us the last of this Month. These will weaken us more than is proper considering the Resolution of taking a Position for the Winter near the Enemy for the more effectual covering the Country.

I have ordered a return to be made of the exact Number of the men in the Eastern Regiments whose times will expire with this year. They were not inlisted upon the Continental Bounty, but drafted by different Townships to make up their Quota of Continental Troops.

I will send up a proper Officer to train and take the Command of the Recruits at York Town.

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The Judge Advocate<sup>15</sup> has gone to visit his family

15. Lieut. Col. William Tudor.

and I send you the Copies of a Number of proceedings of Courts Martial which he left to be forwarded. I cannot say whether all that you call for are among them, but I know that of Genl. Stephens's is. I had ordered him to transmit Copies of all proceedings to the Board of War and I imagine he has done it, in all instances prior to the present.

Lt Colo. Nevil is not out with the present Classes of Pennsylvania Militia neither do I know where he is to be found. I do not know any person qualified for the Business for which he was wanted.

I am very Sensible, that vast quantities of public Arms and stores are carried off by the Militia. But such an Officer as you recommend would not remedy it in the least. The Mischief is not done by those who are regularly discharged, but by those who Desert before the expiration of their time and carry away their Arms &c. privately, nor except an Inspector General could prevent desertion, he would do nothing. I think I can recommend a much more effectual Method and that is, for the States to pass laws, imposing a certain penalty upon any Man who shall have any Arms, Accoutrements or other Stores branded with the Continental Brand found in his House. I am &c.<sup>16</sup>

16. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters near the Gulph, December 14, 1777.

Sir: On Thursday Evening I had the Honor to receive your Favor of the 8th Inst. From the several Letters which have lately passed between Genl. Howe and myself, I am fully convinced, that any propositions by me, to release the Baron St. Ouary<sup>18</sup> from captivity,

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either by an exchange or on parole, would be unavailing. In his Letter of the he [Sir William Howe] has explicitly stated his sentiments, and has declared himself, to be utterly against a partial Exchange. The situation of the Baron, thro' the interest and acquaintance of the Marquis Fayette with [a Mr. Kirkpatrick] an Officer in the Guards, is much more comfortable than that of any of our Officers, who are Prisoners, he being on Parole in the City, whilst they are All confined in the State House. I do not know that it is the practice in Europe, not to consider Volunteers as Prisoners. I am inclined to believe, that it is not, and that they are generally held as such, unless the contrary is particularly stipulated by Cartel. However this may be, they have been held in the present contest on both sides on the footing of other prisoners and exchanged as such. Besides this, I fear, that a proposition calculated for the peculiar benefit of the Baron, would be lily received by our Unhappy Officers, who have been much longer in confinement, whose sufferings are far greater than his, and who claim a right to exchange in due course.

18. On December 3 Congress resolved that Washington request the release of Baron St. Ouary, "a gallant gentleman from France, engaged as a volunteer in the service of the United States, ... lately, by the fortune of war, made prisoner by the British."

The Inquiries directed in the Resolutions contained in your Letter of the 30th Ult., respecting the loss of the Forts in the Highlands and of Fort Mifflin, I shall order to be made, as soon as circumstances will admit.<sup>19</sup> These However it is probable will not be effected in a short time, from the Situation of our Affairs and inevitable necessity.

On Thursday morning we marched from our Old Encampment and intended to pass the Schuylkill at Madisons Ford,<sup>20</sup> where a Bridge had been laid across the River. When the first Division and a part of the Second had passed, they found a body of the Enemy, consisting, from the best accounts we have been able to obtain, of Four Thousand Men, under Lord Cornwallis possessing themselves of the Heights on both sides of the Road leading from the River and the defile called the Gulph, which I presume, are well known to some part of your Honble. Body. This unexpected Event obliged such of our Troops,



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as had crossed to repass and prevented our getting over till the succeeding night. This Manœuvre on the part of the Enemy, was not in consequence of any information they had of our movement, but was designed to secure the pass whilst they were foraging in the Neighbouring Country; they were met in their advance, by General Potter with part of the Pennsylvania Militia, who behaved with bravery and gave them every possible opposition, till they were obliged to retreat from their superior numbers. Had we been an Hour sooner, or had had the least information

19. The draft at this point has the following, which is lined out: "At the same time, I wish Congress had taken these matters under their direction. Whether the loss of the former could have been prevented I can not determine, but I am persuaded it will be found on the strictest inquiry that every aid was given to support the latter that the situation of the army would authorize and that the Officers and Garrison employed in its defence. did all that Men could do to maintain it. They sustained a severe and disagreeable Siege; they fought, they fell and the post was not quitted till it was a mass of Ruins."

20. Matsons Ford, at the Gulph.

of the measure, I am persuaded we should have given his Lordship a fortunate stroke or obliged him to have returned, without effecting his purpose, or drawn out all Genl Howe's force to have supported him. Our first intelligence was that it was all out. He collected a good deal of Forage and returned to the City, the Night we passed the River. No discrimination marked his proceedings. All property, whether Friends or Foes that came in their way was seized and carried off.<sup>21</sup>

Enclosed is a Copy of a Letter from Genl. Burgoyne, by which you will perceive, he requests leave to embark his Troops at Rhode Island or at some place in the sound, and in case this cannot be granted, that he may be allowed, with his Suite to go there and return from thence to England. His first proposition, as I have observed upon a former occasion is certainly inadmissible and for reasons obvious to himself. As to the Second which respects

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the departure of himself and Suite, Congress will be pleased to determine upon it and favor me with their Sentiments by the first Opportunity, that I may know what answer to give him.<sup>22</sup> I learn from Mr. Griffin, who has just come from Boston, that this Gentlemen either holds, or professes to hold very different Ideas of our power, than what he formerly entertained; That, without reserve he has said it would be next to impossible for Britain to succeed in her views, and that he should with freedom declare his Sentiments accordingly on his Arrival in England, and seemed to think the recognition of our Independence by the King and Parliament an Eligible measure,

21. Ford quotes a letter from John Laurens to his father (December 23) giving an account of these movements: "When we marched from Whitemarsh Camp and were in the act of crossing the Schuylkill, we received intelligence that the enemy were advancing on this side of the river ... and were driving Potter's militia before them. Two regiments of this corps, however, are said to have conducted themselves extremely well, and to have given the enemy no small annoyance as they advanced. General Sullivan was Master General of the day ... being uncertain as to the number of the enemy, and dreading their advance in force, when part of the army should be on one side of the river and part on the other, he ordered those troops to recross and our bridge to be rendered impassable. Notice of this was sent to the Commander in chief, and when he arrived, parties of the enemy were seen on the commanding heights on this side of the river. ... Some pronounced hastily that the enemy had received intelligence of our march ... and that they were prepared to oppose our passage. Genl. Washington, who never since I have been in his family, has passed a false judgment on such points, gave it as his opinion that the party in view were foragers; that the meeting was accidental, but, however, the enemy might avail themselves of this unexpected discovery, and might draw as much advantage from it as if the rencounter had been premeditated. The intelligence was received that the enemy were retiring in great haste, but it did not appear satisfactory, and the army was ordered to march to Swedes Ford, three or four miles higher up the river and encamp with the right to the Schuylkill. The next morning the want of provisions—I could weep tears of blood when I say it—the want of provisions rendered it impossible to march. We did not march till the evening

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of that day. Our ancient bridge, an infamous construction, which in many parts obliged the men to march by Indian file, was restored, and a bridge of waggons made over the Swedes Ford, but fencerails from necessity being substituted to plank, and furnishing a very unstable footing. This last served to cross a trifling number of troops. As the event turned out, Genl. Sullivan's retrograde movement was unspeakably unlucky, If we had persevered in crossing in the first instance, or if we had even crossed in the evening of the first day, the flower of the British army must have fallen a sacrifice to superior numbers."

22. On December 17 Congress resolved that General Washington be directed to inform General Burgoyne that Congress would not receive nor consider any proposition for indulgence or altering the terms of the convention of Saratoga, unless immediately directed to their own body. By a resolve of December 1 Congress had already decided to reject any proposal for embarking the convention troops from any place other than that stipulated by the terms of surrender at Saratoga.

under a Treaty of Commerce upon a large and extensive Scale. How far these professions are founded in Sincerity, it is not easy to determine; But if they are what a mighty change. While I am on the subject of Mr. Burgoyne and his Army, I would submit it to Congress, whether it will not be right and reasonable that all Expences, incurred on their Account for Provisions &c. should be paid and satisfied, previous to their embarkation and departure. I mean, by an Actual deposit of the Money. Unless this is done, there will be little reason to suppose, that it will ever be paid. They have failed, that is the Nation, in other instances, as I have been told, after liquidating their Accounts and giving the fullest Certificates and we cannot expect that they will keep better faith with us, than with Others. The payment too, I should apprehend, ought to be in Coin, as it will enable us to administer some relief to our unfortunate Officers and Men who are in Captivity.<sup>23</sup>

December 15.

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Your Favor of the 11th Current,<sup>24</sup> with its Inclosure came to hand Yesterday. Congress seem to have taken for granted a Fact, that is really not so. All the Forage for the Army has been constantly drawn from Bucks and Philadelphia Counties and those parts most contiguous to the City, insomuch that it was nearly exhausted and intirely so in the Country below our Camp. From these too, were obtained all the Supplies of flour that circumstances would admit of. The Millers, in most instances, were unwilling to grind, either from their disaffection or from

23. The Saratoga convention provided that the British troops on their march to Boston were to be supplied with provisions at the same rate of rations as the troops of Gates's army. Gates was paying paper money for his supplies, which had depreciated at this time about two-thirds of its face value. Washington's suggestion to exact payment in coin for what the British consumed was hard driving; but in view of the generous counterfeiting of Continental paper money, indulged in by the British, which counterfeiting had been a real factor in depreciating the Continental money, it is a nice question to decide. Congress was already considering the question, and on December 19 ordered that the accounts of all provisions and other necessaries which already have been, or which hereafter may be supplied by the public to prisoners in the power of these States, shall be discharged by either receiving from the British commissary of prisoners, or any of his agents, provisions or other necessaries, equal in quality and kind to what have been supplied, or the amount thereof in gold and silver, at the rate of 4 s. 6 d. for every dollar of the currency of these States, and that all these accounts be liquidated and discharged, previous to the release of any prisoners to whom provisions or other necessaries shall have been supplied. Burgoyne protested and claimed the convention was infringed by such a demand. He appealed to Howe, and Howe then agreed to an exchange of prisoners, but later difficulties developed.

24. This letter was one of December 12, a copy of which is entered in the "President's Letter Book" in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. The resolve alluded to is that

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(December 10) directing the removal of all stock and provisions beyond the reach of the enemy.

motives of fear. This made the supplies less than they otherwise might have been, and the Quantity which was drawn from thence, was little besides what the Guards, placed at the Mills, compelled them to manufacture. As to Stock, I do not know that much was had from thence, nor do I know that any considerable supply could have been had. I confess, I have felt myself greatly embarrassed with respect to a vigorous exercise of Military power. An ill placed humanity perhaps and a reluctance to give distress may have restrained me too far. But these were not all. I have been well aware of the prevalent jealousy of military power, and that this has been considered as an Evil much to be apprehended even by the best and most sensible among us. Under this Idea, I have been cautious and wished to avoid as much as possible any Act that might improve it. However Congress may be assured, that no exertions of mine as far as circumstances will admit shall be wanting to provide our own Troops with Supplies on the one hand, and to prevent the Enemy from them on the other. At the same time they must be apprized, that many Obstacles have arisen to render the former more precarious and difficult than they usually were from a change in the Commissary's department at a very critical and interesting period. I should be happy, if the Civil Authority in the Several States thro' the recommendations of Congress, or their own mere will, seeing the necessity of supporting the Army, would always adopt the most spirited measures, suited to the end. The people at large are governed much by Custom. To Acts of Legislation or Civil Authority they have been ever taught to yield

a willing obedience without reasoning about their propriety. On those of Military power, whether immediate or derived originally from another Source, they have ever looked with a jealous and suspicious Eye.

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I am extremely sorry for your Indisposition and wishing you the earliest relief from your painful disorder,<sup>25</sup> I have the honor etc.<sup>26</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, December 22, 1777.

Sir: On Saturday Evening, I had the Honor to receive your Favor of the 17th Inst. with Its Inclosure. The next day I wrote to Genl. Burgoyne, upon the Subject of his Application, and transmitted him a Copy of the Resolution of Congress founded thereon. That the matter might not be delayed, I dispatched my Letter by the Express who brought yours, he having informed me, that you expected he would be sent with It.

It is with infinite pain and concern, that I transmit Congress the Inclosed Copies of Sundry Letters respecting the State of the Commissary's department. If these matters

25. Laurens resigned as President of Congress on Dec. 12, 1777, on the ground of ill health, but Congress did not accept the resignation, and he continued as President until Dec. 9, 1778.

26. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

are not exaggerated, I do not know from what cause, this alarming deficiency or rather total failure of Supplies arises; But unless more Vigorous exertions and better regulations take place in that line, and immediately, this Army must dissolve.<sup>56</sup> I have done all in my power, by remonstrating, by writing to, by ordering the Commissaries on this Head, from time to time; but without any good effect, or obtaining more than a present scanty relief. Owing to this, the march of the Army has been delayed upon more than one interesting occasion, in the course of the present Campaign, and had a Body of the Enemy crossed Schuylkill this Morning, as I had reason to expect from the intelligence I received at Four O'Clock last night, the Divisions which I ordered to be in readiness to march and meet

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them, could not have moved. It is unnecessary for me to add more upon the subject. I refer Congress to the Copies, by one of which they will perceive how very unfavorable also our prospect is, of having any considerable supplies of Salt Provisions for the ensuing Year.

I would also take the liberty of reminding Congress of the necessity of filling, as soon as possible, the Offices of Quarter Master<sup>57</sup> and Adjutant General. These Posts are of infinite importance, and without appointments to them, it will be impossible to conduct the Affairs of the Army. The first Office is now suffering much, for want of a Head to direct the great business of it, and the latter will be in the same predicament in the course of a few days by the departure of Colo. Pickering, who has been only waiting, since his

56. Extracts from letters (December 22) from Brig. Gens. Jedidiah Huntington and James Mitchell Varnum are typical:

"I received an order," wrote Huntington to Pickering, "to hold my Brigade in Readiness to march; fighting will be by far preferable to starving; my Brigade are out of Provisions nor can the Brigade Comisary obtain any Meat, it has several Times been the Case before though the Failure has generally been in Flour. I am exceedingly unhappy in being the Bearer of Complaints to Head Quarters. I have used every Argument my Imagination could invent to make the Soldiers easy, but I despair of being able to do it much longer."

Varnum wrote: "According to the saying of Solomon, hunger will break thro' a Stone Wall. It is therefore a very pleasing Circumstance to the Division under my Command, that there is a probability of their marching. Three Days successively we have been destitute of Bread. Two Days we have been intirely without Meat. It is not to be had from the Commissaries. Whenever we procure Beef, it is of such a vile Quality, as to render it a poor Succerdernium for Food. The Men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded. ... The Complaints are too urgent to pass unnoticed. It is with Pain, that I mention this Distress. I know it will make your Excellency unhappy; But, if you expect the Exertions of virtuous Principles, while your Troops are deprived of the essential Necessaries of

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Life, your final Disappointment will be great, in Proportion to the Patience, which now astonishes every Man of human Feeling.”

These letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

57. Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin had tendered his resignation as Quartermaster General of the Continental Army on November 7 on the ground of ill health.

appointment to the Board of War, for a Successor.

Congress were pleased by their Resolution of the 29th Ulto., to direct me to regulate the rank of Major Genl. Arnold and of Brigadier Genls. Woodford and Scott, by calling in their present Commissions and granting New ones agreeable to the principle adopted in their Resolution of the 12th of the same Month. This business so far as it relates to Genl Arnold and General Scott is clear and admits of no difficulty. But it is otherwise in the case of Genl. Woodford. The principle adopted by the Resolution and previously recommended by a Board of General Officers upon another occasion, was, “That relative rank or precedence of Officers, should be settled according *to that standing they held in the Army immediately* before their present Commissions.” At the time General Woodford was appointed, he held no rank in the Army. Hence arises the difficulty with me. Congress, therefore will be pleased to take up the matter and to grant him such a Commission as will satisfy their own intention. His claim is, to rank before such of the Gentlemen appointed Brigadiers when he was, as were younger Colonels than himself. If this was intended by Congress, in their Resolution of the 29th Ulto. and I presume it was, or it can have no operation as to him, an explanatory and directory Resolve would answer every purpose as from that a Commission might be filled up, agreeable to their views respecting him. I wish this business to be determined on as early as possible, in whatever mode Congress may think proper,



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as no subject can be more disagreeable or injurious to the service than that of contested rank. The Generals, who were younger Colonels and promoted above him, I believe were Wayne, Muhlenberg and Weedon. From the difficulties which have arisen in several instances of this sort, in the course of the present Year, I trust Congress will be more guarded in future. They may not be so intimately acquainted with them as I am, But they may be assured there are none of a more fatal and injurious tendency. When rank is once given, no matter upon what principle, whether from mistake or other causes, the Party in possession of it, in most cases is unwilling to give it up, tho' the most obvious principles of Justice, or even the Public good should require it. Such is the general ambition of Men and attachment to their own private preferment. It is a truth, that it will even be found more easy to prevent than to remedy difficulties after they have happened. I do not mention these things from a wish or disposition to dictate, Nothing being farther from my intention; but because my feelings are every day wounded by the discontent, complaints and jarring of the Officers not to add resignations. All of great detriment to the service.

3 O'Clock P.M.

Just as I was about to conclude my Letter, your favor of the 20th with its several Inclosures came to hand.

It would give me infinite pleasure to afford protection to every individual and to every Spot of Ground in the whole of the United States. Nothing is more my wish. But this is not

possible with our present force. In all wars, from the nature of things, Individuals and particular places must be exposed. It has ever been and ever will be the case, and we have only to pity and to regret the misfortune of those, who from their situation are subject to ravage and depredation. These facts are evident and obvious to all, and if that system of conduct is pursued by an Army, which is most likely to give the most general and extensive security, it is all that can be done or expected from it. I assure you, Sir, no circumstance in the course of the present contest, or in my whole life, has employed

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more of my reflection or consideration than in what manner to effect this and to dispose of the Army during the [present] Winter. Viewing the Subject in any point of light, there was choice of difficulties. If keeping the Field was thought of, the naked condition of the Troops and the feelings of Humanity opposed the measure: If retiring to the Towns in the interior parts of the State, which consistently with the preservation of the Troops, from their necessitous circumstances, might have been justifiable, the measure was found inexpedient because it would have exposed and left uncovered, a large extent of Country. If cantoning the Troops in several places, divided and distant from each other, then there was a probability of their being cut off, and but little prospect of their giving security to any part. Under these Embarrassments, I determined to take post near this place, as the best calculated, in my Judgement to secure

the Army, to protect our Stores and cover the Country; and for this purpose we are beginning to hut, and shall endeavour to accomplish it, as expeditiously as possible. I have also from a desire of preventing the Enemy from an intercourse with the Delaware State and from making incursions there detached Genl Smallwood with the Maryland forces to take post at Wilmington, which I had strong reasons to believe the Enemy intended. This However, I cannot but consider as hazardous, and shall be happy if it does not turn out so. I have it also in contemplation, to throw a Bridge over Schuylkill near this place,<sup>58</sup> as soon as it is practicable by means of which I hope we shall be able, in a great measure with the aid of the Militia to check the Excursions of the Enemy's parties on the other side. As to Jersey, I am sensible of her sufferings and exertions in the present contest, and there is no State to which I would more willingly extend protection; But as I have observed, it is not in my power to give it, in that degree, in which it seems to be wished and expected. I cannot divide the Army, not superior (from sickness and other causes equally painful when collected) to the Enemy's force, into detachments contrary to every Military principle and to our own experience of the dangers that would attend it. If this is done, I cannot be answerable for the consequences. My feelings lead strongly to Universal relief, but I have not the power to afford it. Nevertheless it has been and is still my intention, as soon as I

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have formed and secured this Camp to detach a small force to aid and countenance their Militia. This is all it appears to me

58. This bridge was defended on the west side of the Schuylkill by what was called "the Star Redoubt."

that can be done, and I hope their apprehensions for the greater part will prove rather imaginary than well grounded; tho' I confess there are strong reasons to conclude the Enemy will not be remiss, in their acts of violence and injury there or any where else.

Inclosed is a Copy of a Letter from Genl. Howe of the 21st in answer to mine of 28th Ult. and 14 Inst. From this it appears, Transports have sailed to take in Genl Burgoyne and his Troops. Should Mr. Boudinot be at York, I think it will be adviseable to shew him the Copy of Genl. Howe's Letter, that he may expedite the return of the Officers that an equal number of Our's may be released. I have the honor &ca.

P.S. A larger supply of Blank Commissions are still wanted, but few of the States having granted them to their Officers.<sup>59</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, December 22, 1777.

Gentn.: Your favor of the 14th. inst. I received on Saturday Evening. The release of Genl. Thompson is what I wish much to effect. No circumstances have arisen since his captivity by which it

59. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter sent is not found among the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. It was read in Congress on December 26 and referred, along with Washington's letter of December 23 to Congress, to William Duet, John Witherspoon, and John Harvie. On December 29 this committee was discharged and the letters referred to the Board of War, to which Cornelius Harnett, Elbridge Gerry,

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and Abraham Clark were added. The report of the board on regulating the department of the Commissary General of Military Stores was rendered Feb. 5, 1778, and agreed to by Congress on Feb. 7, 1778.

could be accomplished. Your letter is the first and only information I have had, respecting Genl. Hamilton's desire of being exchanged and remaining in America, having never received a line from General Gates or any intelligence from him or any other person upon the subject. However, that Genl. Thompson may have a chance of being relieved from his present disagreeable situation, and of being in a situation to give the States his services, I have written to Genl. Heath to inquire into the matter and to mention it to Genl. Hamilton. If it is wished by him and Genl. Burgoyne, which I shall know from Genl. Heath, I am hopeful Genl. Howe will consent to an Exchange. I have the honor etc.<sup>60</sup>

### **\*To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, December 23, 1777.

Sir: Full as I was in my representation of matters in the Commys. departmt. yesterday, fresh, and more powerful reasons oblige me to add, that I am now convinced, beyond a doubt that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this Army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things. Starve, dissolve, or disperse, in order to obtain

60. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

subsistence in the best manner they can; rest assured Sir this is not an exaggerated picture, but [and] that I have abundant reason to support what I say.

Yesterday afternoon receiving information that the Enemy, in force, had left the City, and were advancing towards Derby with apparent design to forage, and draw Subsistance from that part of the Country, I order'd the Troops to be in readiness, that I might give every

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opposition in my power; when, behold! to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the Men were unable to stir on Acct. of Provision, and that a dangerous Mutiny begun the Night before, and [which] with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertion's of some officers was still much to be apprehended on acct. of their [for] want of this Article.

This brought forth the only Corny. in the purchasing Line, in this Camp; and, with him, this Melancholy and alarming truth; that he had not a single hoof of any kind to Slaughter, and not more than 25. Barls. of Flour! From hence form an opinion of our Situation when I add, that, he could not tell when to expect any.

All I could do under these circumstances was, to send out a few light Parties to watch and harrass the Enemy, whilst other Parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much Provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the Soldiery. But will this answer? No Sir: three or four clays bad weather would prove our destruction.

What then is to become of the Army this Winter? and if we are as often without Provisions now, as with it [them], what is to become of us in the Spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid perhaps of Militia, to take advantage of an early Campaign before the Enemy can be reinforced ? These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention, and will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected, and to be affected by the event, justifie my saying that the present Commissaries are by no means equal to the execution [of the Office] or that the disaffection of the People is past all belief. The misfortune however does in my opinion, proceed from both causes, and tho' I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that departmt. took place contrary to my judgment,<sup>63</sup> and the consequences thereof were predicted; yet, finding that the inactivity of the Army, whether for want of provisions, Cloaths, or other essentials, is charged to my Acct., not only by the common vulgar, but those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself; with truth then I can declare that, no Man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded

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than I have, by every department of the Army. Since the Month of July, we have had no assistance from the Quarter Master Genl.<sup>64</sup> and to want of assistance from this department, the Commissary Genl. charges great part of his deficiency; to this I am to add, that notwithstanding it is a standing order (and often repeated) that the Troops shall always have two days Provisions by them, that they may [might] be ready at any sudden call, yet, no

63. The change was ordered by Congress. (See resolves of June 10, Oct. 4, and Nov. 24, 1777, in *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

64. Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin. He had resigned as Quartermaster General of the Continental Army Nov. 7, 1777, to become a member of the Continental Board of War.

opportunity has scarce[ly] ever yet happened [offered] of taking advantage of the Enemy that has not been either totally obstructed or greatly impeded on this Acct., and this tho' the great and crying evil is not all. Soap, Vinegar and other Articles allowed by Congress we see none of nor have [we] seen [them] I believe since the battle of Brandywine; the first indeed we have now little occasion of [for] few men having more than one Shirt, many only the Moiety of one, and Some none at all; in addition to which as a proof of the little benefit received from a Cloathier Genl., and at the same time as a further proof of the inability of an Army under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of Soldiers (besides a number of Men confined to Hospitals for want of Shoes, and others in farmers Houses on the same Acct.) we have, by a field return this day made no less than 2898 Men now in Camp unfit for duty because they are bare foot and otherwise naked and by the same return it appears that our whole strength in continental Troops (Including the Eastern Brigades which have joined us since the surrender of Genl. Burgoyne) exclusive of the Maryland Troops sent to Wilmington amount to no more than 8200 In Camp fit for duty. Notwithstanding which, and that, since the 4th Instt. our Numbers fit for duty from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on Acct. of Blankets (numbers

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being [having been] obliged and [still are to] do set up all Night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural [and common] way) have decreased near 2000 Men.

we find Gentlemen without knowing whether the Army was really going into Winter Quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the remonstrance)<sup>65</sup> reprobating the measure as much as if they thought Men [the Soldiery] were made of Stocks or Stones and equally insensible of frost and Snow and moreover, as if they conceived it [easily] practicable for an inferior Army under the disadvantages I have describ'd our's to be wch. is by no means exaggerated to confine a superior one (in all respects well appointed, and provided for a Winters Campaign) within the City of Phila., and [to] cover from depredation and waste the States of Pensa., Jersey, &ca. but what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that these very Gentn. who were well apprized of the nakedness of the Troops, from occular demonstration [who] thought their own Soldiers worse clad than others, and advised me, near a Month ago, to postpone the execution of a Plan, I was about to adopt (in consequence of a resolve of Congress) for seizing Cloaths, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days agreeably to a decree of the State<sup>66</sup> not one Article of wch., by the bye, is yet come to hand, should think a Winters Campaign and the covering these States from the Invasion of an Enemy so easy [and practicable] a business. I can assure those Gentlemen that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fire side than to occupy a cold bleak hill and sleep under frost and Snow without Cloaths or Blankets; however, although they seem to have

65. The Pennsylvania Legislature addressed a remonstrance to Washington against putting the Army into winter quarters. (See *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, 6, 104,)

66. Col. John Bayard and James Young were a committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety which consulted Washington on the matter of clothing for the Pennsylvania troops.

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little feeling for the naked, and distressed Soldier, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my Soul pity those miseries, wch. it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent.

It is for these reasons therefore I have dwelt upon the Subject, and it adds not a little to my other difficulties, and distress, to find that much more is expected of me than is possible to be performed, and that upon the ground of safety and policy, I am obliged to conceal the true State of the Army from Public view and thereby expose myself to detraction and Calumny.

The Honble. Comee of Congress went from Camp fully possessed of my Sentiments respecting the Establishment of this Army, the necessity of Auditors of Accts, appointment of Officers, new arrangements, &ca. I have no need therefore to be prolix on these Subjects, but refer to them after adding a word or two to shew, first, the necessity of some better provision for binding the Officers by the tye of Interest to the Service (as No day, nor scarce an hour passes without the offer of a resignd Commission) otherwise I much doubt the practicability of holding the Army together much longer. In this I shall, probably, be thought more sincere, when I freely declare that I do not, myself, expect to derive the smallest benefit from any establishment that Congress may adopt, otherwise than as a Member of the Community at large in the good which I am perswaded will result from the measure by making better Officers and better Troops, and Secondly to point out the necessity of making the

Appointments, arrangements, &ca. without loss of time. We have not more than 3 Months to prepare a great deal of business in; if we let these slip, or waste, we shall be labouring under the same difficulties all next Campaign as we have done this, to rectifie mistakes and bring things to order. Military arrangements and movements in consequence, like the Mechanism of a Clock, will be imperfect, and disorderd, by the want of a part; in a very sensible degree have I experienced this in the course of the last Summer, Several Brigades having no Brigadiers appointed to them till late and some not at all; by which means it follows that an additional weight is thrown upon the Shoulders of the Commander



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in chief to withdraw his attention from the great line of his duty. The Gentlemen of the Comee. when they were at Camp talk'd of an expedient for adjusting these matters, which I highly approved and wish to see adopted namely, that two or three Members of the Board of War or a Comee of Congress should repair immediately to Camp where the best aid can be had and with the Commanding Officer, or a Comee of his appointing[ment] prepare and digest the most perfect plan that can be devised for correcting all abuses, making new arrangements, considering what is to be done with the weak and debilitated regiments (if the States to wch they belong, will not draft men to fill them, for as to enlisting Soldiers it seems to me to be totally out of the question) together with many other things that would occur in the course of such a conference, and after digesting matters in the best manner they can to submit

the whole to the ultimate determination of Congress. If this measure is approved of I would earnestly advise the immediate execution of it and that the Corny. General of Purchases whom I rarely see, may be directed to form Magazines without a Moments delay, in the Neighbourhood of this Camp in order to secure Provision for us in case of bad weather; the Quarter Mr. Genl. ought also to be busy in his department; in short there is as much to be done in preparing for a Campaign as in the active part of it; in fine, every thing depends upon the preparation that is made in the several departments in the course of this Winter and the success, or misfortunes of next Campaign will more than probably originate with our activity, or supinehess this Winter. I am &ca.67

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, December 26, 1777.

Sir: The reason of my troubling you, at this time, is, to request, that Congress will defer their decision on General Woodford's claim of rank for the present. I find that the Gentn. affected by it, are much averse to it, and therefore shall direct

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67. The bracketed words in this letter are Robert Hanson Harrison's efforts to improve Washington's diction. The letter sent is missing from the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. It was sold at auction in 1933 and, from the catalogue description, was a copy, by Harrison, of Washington's autograph draft. Harrison's copy, which Washington signed, shows a few minor verbal variations. (See note to letter of Washington to the President of Congress, Dec. 22, 1777, *ante*.)

the whole to state their objections, which I shall transmit by the earliest opportunity that, Congress may be fully possessed of the Subject and apprized of the difficulties involved in matters of this sort. I have the honor, etc.<sup>75</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, December 29, 1777.

Gentlemen: Captain Sullivan, who will deliver this, was bearer of a Letter to me from Colo. Gibson Commanding Officer at Fort Pitt, in which the Garrison is represented as exceedingly distressed for want of Cloathing, and I am solicited, to give such directions as may facilitate the procuring a Supply. I have, in consequence, written to you on the subject and have no doubt, that every thing on your part will be done, as far as circumstances allow, to administer the speediest relief to the unhappy sufferers. I am etc.<sup>1</sup>

75. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, December 30, 1777.

Sir: Capt. Jones<sup>5</sup> of Colo. Baylor's Regt. of Light dragoons, has a troop of Men inlisted and accoutrements complete; but not having been able to procure Horses, at the limited price, the Men are yet dismounted.

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I am informed, that there are a number of horses at Lancaster and Carlisle, which were purchased for the North Carolina light dragoons; but 'tis said, they have neither proper Arms or Accoutrements, if therefore those Horses could be delivered to Capt. Jones they would immediately render very essential service, for the regiments that have been upon duty the last Campaign, are so reduced, that they can scarcely furnish the necessary patrols for the security of the Camp. I am sending off all the worn down Horses to recruit, and I could therefore wish, that the Board would give orders, that the Horses at Lancaster and Carlisle may be delivered to Capt. Jones, except the North Carolinians, for whom they were intended, are ready to mount and take the Field. I am &c.6

5. Capt. Cadwallader Jones, of the Third Continental Dragoons. He served as an aide to Lafayette, 1778–81.

6. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 1, 1778.

Sir: I have been duly honored with your several favors of the 23d, 24th and 25th Ult. with the several inclosures to which they allude.<sup>26</sup>

In my letters of the 22d and 23d of last month I mentioned the difficulties which the service laboured under for want of a Qr. Master General, and as I am induced to believe that a new nomination has not been made since General Mifflin's resignation, because Congress could not fix upon any person in their opinions, fully qualified to fill that important Office, I thought it my duty to endeavour to find out a Gentleman who I could venture to recommend either from my own particular knowledge or from that of others. That my enquiries might be more extensive, I occasionally mentioned the Matter to the General and Field Officers and desired them, if any person came within their Idea as proper, that they

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would mention him to me, that I might upon their comparative Merits, fix upon the most deserving.

Several of the Officers from the Northward spoke of the uncommon activity and exertions of Colo. Hay D. Qt. Mr. Genl. in that department. Hearing him so well spoken of I enquired very particularly of most of those who had Served there the last Campaign and of General Sullivan and General Wayne who had served in that Country the two preceeding ones in times of uncommon difficulty.

26. At this point in the draft the following has been crossed out: "I must beg the particular and immediate attention of Congress to a matter of the utmost importance to the Army, and which I fear has been too long delayed. I mean the appointment of a Quarter Master General. Since General Mifflin's indisposition obliged him to quit the field in July last I have experienced the greatest difficulties and inconveniences for want of a person of activity and authority at the head of that department. Upon General Mifflin's resignation, and I can only account for its not having been filled up since his resignation and indeed to believe that."

They confirmed the favorable reports of the others and went as far as to say, that without disparagement to any Gentleman, they thought him the best qualified of any Man upon the Continent for the Office in Question. Upon this universal concurrence of all parties, I think I may Venture to recommend Colo. Hay to the consideration of Congress and if upon further inquiry they should find him answer the high Character which he bears, I hope no time may be lost in appointing him, provided some other has not already been the object of their Choice. I will just add, that Colo. Hay's pretensions, in right of Seniority, entitles him to notice.

You must be fully Sensible, that very little time is left between this and the opening of the next Campaign for the provision of Field equipage, Carriages, Horses and many other

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Articles essentially necessary, towards which I cannot find that any steps have yet been taken.

In my last I also took occasion to mention, that by Colo. Pickering's appointment to the Board of War, I expected he would soon be called upon to take his Seat. In a letter from the Secretary of the 24th Ult., I am desired to permit him to retire and nominate an Adjutant General pro tempore. But as there is no person on the spot that I can with propriety ask to accept of the place pro tempore, I am obliged to detain him, and am under the necessity, for that reason, of urging a new appointment as speedily as possible. I have taken the same methods of endeavouring to find out a person qualified for an

Adjutant General that I did for that of Qr. Mr. General. But I can not say that I have recd. any account sufficiently satisfactory to determine me in favor of any particular person. I will just recite the Names that have been mentioned to me, which are Colos. Lee and Scammell of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Colos. Innis and Davies of Virginia and Major Scull of Pennsylvania. The four first are well known to many Gentlemen of Congress and Major Scull is warmly recommended by Genl. St. Clair.

The Enemy returned into Philadelphia on Sunday last, having made a considerable Hay forage, which appeared to be there only intention. As they kept themselves in close order and in such a position that no attack could be made upon them to advantage, I could do no more than extend light parties along their front and keep them from plundering the inhabitants and carrying off Cattle and Horses, which had the desired effect.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that a Vessel has fallen into Genl. Smallwood's hands near Wilmington, I hope she will prove a valuable prize. You have the particulars in the inclosed extract of his Letter.<sup>27</sup>

Before this reaches you, you will have recd. a letter from General Weedon in which he has stated his objections to Genl. Woodford's taking Rank of him. Genl. Muhlenberg is gone to Virginia. I cannot therefore say what would have been his objections, but I imagine they

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are founded upon the same Reasons as those of Genl. Weedon's and you may perceive by the inclosed Copy of Genl Wayne's letter to

27. The captures were a sloop with flour, pork, poultry, and other supplies, and an armed brig named *Symetry*, which ran aground and surrendered after a couple of shots were fired into her from a fieldpiece. She had on board clothing for four British regiments, over 1,000 stand of arms, ammunition, pork, butter, and a great deal of baggage of British officers. Smallwood's letter, dated Dec. 30, 1777, is in the *Washington Papers*, in the Library of Congress.

me that he does not think that the rank of Colonel which Genl Woodford held at the time of his Resignation could operate in his favor upon his appointment to the rank of Brigadier Genl.; I could therefore wish that Congress, as they now have the matter fully before them would proceed to the final settlement of the relative Rank of the Brigadiers. I am &ca.28

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 2, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty of transmitting you the Inclosed Copies of a Letter, from me to Genl. Conway, since his return from York to Camp, and Two Letters from him to me, which you will be pleased to lay before Congress. I shall not in this Letter animadvert upon them, but after making a single observation submit the whole to Congress.

If General Conway means, by cool receptions mentioned in the last paragraph of his Letter of the 31st Ult., that I did not receive him in the language of a warm and cordial Friend, I readily confess the charge. I did not, nor shall I ever, till I am capable of the arts of dissimulation. These I despise, and my

28. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

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feelings will not permit me to make professions of friendship to the man I deem my Enemy, and whose system of conduct forbids it. At the same time, Truth authorizes me to say, that he was received and treated with proper respect to his Official character, and that he has had no cause to justify the assertion, that he could not expect any support for fulfilling the duties of his Appointment. I have the honor, etc.

P.S. The Inclosed Extract from the proceedings of a Council of Genl. Officers will shew, the Office of Inspector Genl. was a matter not of such modern date as Genl. Conway mentions it to be, and that it was one of the Regulations in view for the reform of the Army.<sup>33</sup> The Foreign Officers who had Commissions and no Commands and who were of ability, were intended to be recommended to execute it; particularly the Baron D'Arendt with whom the Idea originated, and whose capacity seemed to be well admitted.<sup>34</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 2, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty of introducing Major John Clark,

33. See Washington's letter to the Council of War, Oct. 29, 1777, *ante*.

34. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on January 7 and referred to the Board of War.

the Bearer of this, to your notice. He entered the Service at the commencement of the War and has for some time past acted as Aid de Camp to Major Genl Greene. He is active, sensible and enterprising and has rendered me very great assistance since the army has been in Pennsylvania by procuring me constant and certain intelligence of the motions and intentions of the Enemy. It is somewhat uncertain whether the State of the Major's health will admit of his remaining in the military line, if it should, I may perhaps have occasion to recommend him in a more particular manner to the favor of Congress at a future time.

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At present I can assure you that if you should, while he remains in the neighbourhood of York, have any occasion for his Services, you will find him not only willing, but very capable of executing any of your Commands. I am etc.<sup>35</sup>

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 2–3, 1778.

Gentn.: Your Several Letters of the 23rd. 24th and 27th Ult. have been received.

Agreeable to your request I shall communicate to General Howe the information you have received respecting Capt. Dick<sup>36</sup> and

35. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

36. Captain Dick seems to have been a sea captain.

the other American Officers, with your determination to retaliate on an equal number of their Officers, till Capt. Dick &c. are relieved from their cruel and unjustifiable treatment.<sup>37</sup>

It would be a happy circumstance, if the Cloathing from Virginia was made up, that it might be delivered to the Troops from thence. I believe there will be little, nay none for any other part of the Army, after they are supplied, supposing such to be the wish of the State. Their views do not extend only to such of their Soldiery as are now in Camp, but to their Men in Hospitals and the recruits or drafts who will join hereafter; And I am satisfied, should any of it be appropriated to the use of others and their own troops want, there will be disgust and dissatisfaction. From the Letters I have received upon the Subject, it is particularly mentioned that the supplies which the states procures, are intended for their own Men and this is agreeable to the Idea entertain'd by the other States. The Connecticut Troops now here, have received from thence more necessaries of an essential nature than their present wants require and these are kept for their future demands. As to Blankets, I really do not know what will be done. Our situation in this instance is peculiarly distressing. I



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suppose that not less than from 3 to 4000 are now wanted in Camp, Our Sick want, Our unfortunate men in captivity want. I gave Doctor Shippen an order some time ago for 400, said to be coming from the East. ward; whether they have been received or not, I cannot tell. To relieve in one quarter, is to distress in another, and I do not see that any of those sent from Virginia, can be possibly spared from

37. See Washington's letter to Sir William Howe, Jan. 8, 1778, *post*.

the Troops here.

I have written to Genl Smallwood, who is posted at Wilmington, respecting the Cattle said to be driven to the Marshes in Kent County, and given him direction to inquire into the fact and if found true, to pursue proper measures for their removal and security, [which, in a Letter just received from him, he has promised to do.]<sup>38</sup>

I hoped before this Congress would have fixed upon a proper person for the Office of Adjutant General. Till it is done, I do not know how it will be possible to spare Colo. Pickering. I addressed them yesterday upon the subject.

Whether the Men from the Eastward, drafted for a short term of Service, have received Cloathing is a matter I am not able to determine. I do not apprehend that they have drawn much since they joined this Army; Because the supplies in the Cloathier's hands would not admit of it; nor do I know certainly whether they have had any. As far as it is in my power I shall attend to the prohibition, tho' the observance of it will be found easier in Speculation than in practice.

I have given directions to the Commissary and Qr. Master about the Flour and Bread at Elk and hope measures will be pursued, that they will be with the Army or in the vicinity of it by the time they are wanted.

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The Army being much reduced by Sickness, by the expiration of the time of service of Several of the Troops,

38. The words within the brackets have been inserted by Washington.

by Detachments and other Causes, I cannot think it safe to weaken it more, and therefore cannot comply with the requisition for sending Taylors to Lancaster. However, that the Supplies of Cloathing may be forwarded, I have directed a return to be made of all the Taylors and they will be set to Work either in Camp or at some place Contiguous to it, as soon as Cloth and other materials arrive.<sup>39</sup>

January 3.

Your favors of the 28th and 30th Ult. came to hand this Morning. In compliance with the Board's request, I have ordered Colo. Heartley's Regiment to march to York, and in turn shall expect as soon as possible the Detachment of Men, which you mention. This measure at the same time, does not appear to me very adviseable, The Army, as I have observed before, being greatly reduced and weakened by the term of service of several Regiments being expired and from other causes. It is daily diminishing. On the 31st day of Decr. the Inlistments of near 300 of Colo Stewart's Regiment ended and they are all gone. Our condition in point of force is far from being the most eligible or respectable, and in case the Enemy should make a General push, would be hazardous.

I shall use every exertion, that may be expedient and practicable, for subsisting the Army and keeping it together; But I must observe, that, this never can be done by coercive means. Supplying of Provisions and Cloathing must be had in another way, or it cannot exist. The small seizures, that were made of the former, some days ago, in consequence of the most pressing

39. At this point in the draft the following is crossed out: "The service and interest of my Country, I have much at heart, and no Man has laboured with more unwearied assiduity

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to promote these than I have in the present Contest. This I shall continue to do as far as it may be in my power; But I fear the Board's expectations will never be answered in the instance in which they have so particularly recommended my co-operation and Countenance; I mean in the case of General Conway. His appointment to the office of Inspector General, I believe, would have caused no uneasiness; But his promotion to the rank of Major General has given much. My exertions to cooperate with him, or any other Officer to establish discipline shall always be employed; but my feelings and opinion of him will never permit me, without the grossest dissimulation which I abhor and despise, to countenance the man as my Friend, whom I know to be my Enemy, and who has been using every base and insidious art to injure me."

and urgent necessity, when the alternative was to do that or dissolve, excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness imaginable even among some of our best and Warmest Friends. Such procedures may relieve for an Instant, but eventually will prove of the most pernicious consequences, besides spreading disaffection and jealousy in the people, they never fail even in the most veteran Armies, under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the Soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, plunder, and Robbery, which has ever been found, exceedingly difficult to suppress and which has not only proved ruinous to the Inhabitants, but in many instances to Armies themselves.

I have communicated to the Army the Matters directed in the resolutions of the 29th. Ulto.40 I have the honor, etc.41

### **\*To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 4, 1778.

Sir: Unwilling as I am to add any thing to the Multiplicity of Matters that necessarily engages the attention of Congress, I am compelled by unavoidable necessity to pass my answer to Genl. Gates through their hands.

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40. Should be 30th. (See General Orders, Jan. 3, 1778, *post.*)

41. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

What could induce Genl. Gates to communicate a copy of his Letter to me, to that Honble. Body, is beyond the depth of my comprehension upon any fair ground; but the fact being so, must stand as an apology for a liberty, which no other consideration would have induced me to take, to give you this trouble. With the greatest respect I am, etc.<sup>57</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 5, 1778.

Sir: I yesterday Evening had the honor of your Favor of the 1st Instant with its several inclosures.

The Letter you allude to from the Committee of Congress and Board of War came to hand on Saturday Morning; But it does not mention the Regulations adopted for removing the difficulties and failures in the Commissary line. I trust they will be vigorous, or the Army cannot exist. It will never answer to procure Supplies of Cloathing or Provision, by coercive measures. The small seizures made of the former, a few days ago, in consequence of the most pressing and absolute necessity, when that or to dissolve was the alternative, excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness, even among

57. Both the draft and the letter sent are in Washington's writing, the only difference being in the word "matters" in the first sentence. In the draft Washington wrote "matters" first and then changed it to "business."

our best and warmest friends. Such procedures may give a momentary relief, but if repeated, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Besides spreading disaffection, jealousy and fear in the people, they never fail, even in the most Veteran troops, under

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the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the Soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, plunder and Robbery, difficult to suppress afterwards, and which has proved not only ruinous to the Inhabitants, but in many instances to Armies themselves. I regret the occasion that compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it among the greatest of our misfortunes, if we should be under the necessity of practising it again.

I had received from the Board of War, a Copy of the Resolutions of the 29th.<sup>58</sup> Ult<sup>o</sup>. and published such parts in Orders as were directed. I shall endeavour as far as possible to carry the intention of Congress into execution respecting the Extra pay, and to prevent any from receiving it, who do not come under their description.

The three packets with Commissions came safe to hand. I have, &c.

P.S. I am now under the necessity of keeping several parties from the Army, threshing Grain, that our Supplies may not fail. But this will not do. As to meat our Stock is trifling, not being sufficient for more than two days, if so long, with the most sparing œconomy.<sup>59</sup>

58. Should be 30th.

59. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 9, 1778.

Sir: I Yesterday Evening had the honor to receive your favor of the 5th. Inst. with its Inclosures.

The power Congress have been pleased to vest me with for appointing Aids de Camp, I shall use with œconomy, and will not appoint more, at any time, than shall be necessary and essential to advance the public interest. Any future appointments that may be

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material, will be made out of the line of the Army, if circumstances will allow it. In general this has been the case.<sup>85</sup>

The proceedings of Congress for the detention of Genl. Burgoyne and Army, or rather suspending their embarkation, till the convention of Saratoga is explicitly ratified and notified by the Court of Britain shall remain secret here, till they are duly announced by Congress. This procedure, when known to the General, will chagrine him much; For I learn by a Letter from Genl. Heath, that the refusal to let his troops embark at Rhode Island had given him some uneasiness.

I have nothing of importance to communicate and have only to add, that I have the honor, etc.

85. By the resolve of January 3 Washington was authorized to appoint such aides-de-camp for himself as he should think proper and to make the appointments from regimental officers, if he saw fit. He had met former necessities by appointing extra aides, though no more than three could, by previous resolves of Congress, draw aides' pay or claim rank. Capt. George Lewis and Maj. Caleb Gibbs, of the Commander in Chief's Guard. were outstanding examples.

P.S. The great diversity of Opinions prevailing, as to the Operations which the resolve of the 30th Ult. and 1st Inst. should have, which give a Month's Extra pay, makes it necessary for me to request Congress to describe with certainty and precision the persons whom they intended should be the particular Objects of their benevolence. Without this I am certain, I shall not be able to execute the Resolves, according to their intention and in a manner that will be agreeable to the Army.

If such Officers and men, as were in Camp when the Resolves were passed and who continue the whole winter are the only Objects to be benefitted; It is urged, that many who have discharged their duty with fidelity, who have experienced a severe campaign to that time or till a few days before, who may be now out of Camp, and yet be here in the

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course of the Winter will be excluded. For Example All Officers and men on furloughs, tho they should have been long from their Homes before, perhaps much longer in many instances than many who remain and whose private and family necessities obliged them to be absent. Those who have fallen sick from their services and are in the Hospitals or the Country, Detachments on command, these would be excluded. Such discriminations, I believe will give great disgust and uneasiness. it is difficult in cases of this nature to draw a proper line of distinction and impossible to do it in such a way as to give general satisfaction. I do not mean to enlarge upon the subject, my only wish is to have it precisely ascertained, who

are to be included and paid, and who are not, under the Resolves, that I may not on the one hand act contrary to public intention, and on the other give cause of complaint and perhaps do wrong to Individuals.

Knowing the difficulty of drawing a proper line and the disgust and murmurings that ever attend discriminations, were I to advise upon the subject, Only such Officers and Men should be excluded, since Extra pay has been determined on, as are absent from Camp without regular authority or such as may abuse Indulgences regularly obtained. It has been observed by some and perhaps with propriety, that there are Officers and Men now in Camp or who may be shortly in, who have no superior claim to merit; whose affairs are not so pressing, or who have already had indulgencies, or who from their being nearer their Friends and connections have had Opportunities of seeing them frequently, of ordering their concerns and visiting their Homes once or twice or perhaps oftener in the Campaign, whilst they who were more remote were precluded from any of these advantages and were constantly on duty. These considerations will have their weight in the scale of disgust with the parties interested. For my part, tho' the Resolves were founded in principles of generosity, were intended to reward merit and promote the service, from the difficulties attending the execution, I wish they had never been made,

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especially, as I believe, Officers and Men would in a little time have been tolerably well reconciled to their Quarters. I have, &c.<sup>86</sup>

86. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To JAMES LOVELL**

Head Quarters, January 9, 1778.

Sir: In consequence of your Letter of the 31st of last month, I dispatched a Gentleman well acquainted with the ground and Inhabitants in the vicinity where the Journals of Congress were said to be deposited, in order to make inquiry concerning them; he found them without difficulty, and they will be sent forward to York, under the Escort of Colo. Hartley's Regiment. The search for the Types was not attended with equal Success; all that could be discover'd respecting them was, that the person who had possession of the papers, said he suspected the Types were concealed in some interior part of the Country; but he could not speak with any degree of certainty or precision upon the Subject.<sup>87</sup> I am, etc.<sup>88</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 12, 1778.

Sir: As I do not recollect with precision whether any or what Resolutions have been made by Congress respecting Captures by the Army or detachments of It, and not having all their

87. In September, 1777, Congress had directed General Armstrong to remove all the presses and type (except Dunlap's) from Philadelphia and Germantown to places of safety in the country, and on October 17 the Committee on Intelligence was directed to bring a press to York, Pa, Hall & Sellers were printing at York for Congress early in 1778.

88. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.



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proceedings with me, with which I have been honored from time to time, to assist my inquiries upon the subject, I must take the liberty to request, that they will determine and favor me with their decisions upon the following points.

First, What articles captured are to be considered as public property?

Secondly, Whether Articles captured by parties or Detachments, not determined public property, are to be distributed or sold for the benefit of it, the Army at large, or are to be considered as the sole and exclusive right of the Captors?

Thirdly, If in general instances, such articles as are taken and not considered public property, are determined to be the sole and exclusive right of the Captors are Stationary Detachments, who from their situation have much more than a common chance of making prizes to be considered upon the same footing ?

Fourthly, If there is to be a distinction between Stationary and Other detachments, and the former are denied an exclusive right to the Captures they make, what proportion of the Articles are they to have?

I have been induced to state the above Questions on account of some difficulties, that have arisen, respecting the prize taken by the Detachment at Wilmington under Genl. Smallwood, that the same may be determined and certain principles established to govern in like and future cases. In the instance of this prize, as the baggage taken, from Genl. Smallwood's and the Officers representation,

will be but inconsiderable, when divided among themselves, I have consented that they shall have it at a just appraisement and distribution, and directed him to have the whole and the value properly inventoried, that such order may be made respecting the latter, as the decisions of Congress may justifie and point out. I have also directed a Sale of the

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Brig, as I understand some Offers have been made for her, and as her situation may be considered hazardous and precarious.

Besides the Brig taken at Wilmington, a vessel has stranded at Reedy Island with Goods on board. It is said a quantity of Rum, some bales of Cloth, a number of Hats and some other articles, all wanted by the Army, have been taken out of her by the Militia, particularly those of Kent County. These General Smallwood is endeavouring to find, that they may be of public benefit. I have the honor, etc.<sup>99</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, January 13, 1778.

Sir: This will be deliver'd to you by the Chevalier de

99. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on January 20 and referred to the Marine Committee.

Mauduit du Piessis, who was among the first French Officers that joined the Army of the United States; the gallant Conduct of this young Gentleman at Brandywine, German Town, and his distinguished Services at Fort Mercer, where he united the Offices of Engineer and Commandant of Artillery, entitle him to the particular notice of Congress; he made several judicious alterations in the works at Red bank, shew'd great good Conduct during the action in which the Hessians were repulsed and was spoken of in consequence in terms of the highest applause by the Commanding Officer of the Post; after the evacuation was determined upon he became the means of saving some valuable Artillery and Stores, and cheerfully undertook as Volunteer the hazardous operation of blowing up the Magazines &c without the apparatus usually provided upon such occasions. I must farther add in Mr. Duplessis favour that he possesses a degree of Modesty not always found in men who have performed brilliant actions. It is with pleasure therefore that I recommend it to Congress to grant him a Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel, a Reward due to his merit and

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which will not have the inconvenience of occasioning any dissatisfaction in the Corps to which he belongs. As some particular Circumstances have prevented Mr. Duplessis waiting upon Congress sooner, I hope there will be no difficulty in antedating the Brevet, so that the Recompense may more immediately follow the Services which he has done; at the same time that there may not be any uneasiness on the part of Mr. Fleury whom Congress has been pleased to reward in the same way, and as their times of Service are nearly equal in France, I would propose that Mr. Duplessis Brevet should bear the same date, vizt. the 26th. November.

I have the honor, etc.<sup>14</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 23, 1778.

Sir: Inclosed you will receive Copies of Letters in favor of

14. In the writing of John Laurens. It is indorsed as read in Congress on January 19 and "request granted." The draft, also in Laurens's writing, varies in many, but not important, particulars.

Messieurs de la Neuville<sup>79</sup> from the Marechal Merlet and the Marquis de Bouilly<sup>80</sup> to me, together with a Certificate signed by the Baron de Wurmser; all my knowledge of these Officers who are solicitous of employment in the American Service is derived from these papers and what I have seen of them during their Stay in Camp; the manners and appearance of these Gentlemen give a prepossession in their favor and seem to confirm the Recommendations which they bring. I have the honor, etc.<sup>81</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 24, 1778.

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Sir: I have reced. your favor of the 8th. inst. and that of Mr. Nourse<sup>94</sup> of the 16th. Upon the receipt of yours some time ago, Upon the Subject of the Leather in the Vatts at Germantown, I made enquiry and was told then as I am now, that, except that which is fit to put into the Curriers hands is immediately worked up, and that which is not Sufficiently tanned is shifted into other Vatts, that it will be undoubtedly spoiled. As I had no person to superintend this Business I did not think it worth while to remove the leather, when there would have been almost an

79. Chev. de la Neuville. He was inspector general of the Northern Department in May, 1778; brevet brigadier general Aug. 14, 1778.

80. François Claude Amour, Marquis de Bouillé, lieutenant general of the French Army. and later governor general of the French Windward Islands.

81. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

94. Joseph Nourse, deputy secretary of the Board of War.

absolute certainty of its being ruined. I have seen nothing of Capt. Ming, but if you will order him down, and he will prepare some Tanneries, at a convenient distance back from Germantown to receive the leather, I will furnish a proper party and endeavour to bring it off. The less that is said of this matter, the better, as it must be executed with Secrecy and dispatch.. You certainly must be misinformed, as to the quantity of leather in Germantown or Captain Ming's consumption must be much less than I imagined. Those Tanyards at the lower end of the Town, may probably be out of our reach, without risking too much. I think the plan of having some Boats upon Susquehannah a very good one. Altho' the Army may not have occasion to pass, yet they will very much expedite the passage of the Supplies which we shall probably have occasion to draw from the West Side of that River next Campaign. Genl Mifflin, who had those built which we used upon Delaware, is well acquainted with the proper kinds.

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The demand of the return of Messrs. Wallace and Philipse, agreeable to the terra of their parole, comes in my opinion more directly under cognizance of the State of New York, whose Prisoners they are. They have several times exchanged Flags, with the Governor of the City of New York on the Subject of their State prisoners, and I think they may with more propriety make a peremptory demand of those Gentlemen, except they will exchange Mr. Fell<sup>95</sup> for one of them, than I can. It is more than probable that the State may have some of the Friends of the Crown in their Custody, and if they

95. John Fell, New Jersey Delegate to the Continental Congress.

threaten retaliation upon them, it will have more effect than my writing to Genl. Howe, who, to the best of my knowledge, said he had nothing to do with them when they were demanded by Governor Trumbull. Would it not be proper to write to Govr. Clinton, and know from him in what light the Gentlemen above mentioned are considered by the State? I have, &c.

January 25.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing I have recd a letter from Genl. Heath of the 6th in which he says.

I have sounded what your Excellency observed with respect to Genl. Hamilton. Genl. Burgoyne informs me, that he never heard Genl. Hamilton hint any such desire, but whether he should be exchanged or not, he must go to England, as his Regiment is one of those under the Convention and he is a General Officer *only* in America. I shall again sound the matter with Genl Hamilton with all due caution.<sup>96</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Valley Forge, January 26, 1778.

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Sir: I this Evening received a Letter from Lt. Colo. Smith at Lancaster, advising me of the confinement of the British Officers, who were going with the Cloathing and medicine for the Prisoners

96. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman, and is addressed to Richard Peters, secretary of the Board of War.

in our hands.

This measure I consider as rather unfortunate, as they came out by my permission and in consequence of a Stipulation between myself and General Howe.

The Officers are a Hessian and British Regimental Quarter Master and a Doctor and two Mates. They had passports signed by one of my Aids, who met them at our most advanced post and were attended by a Captain and Lieutenant of our Army. Mr. Boudinot, I am persuaded, was mistaken in his representation respecting General Howe's forbidding any more Provisions being sent in by Water, as the only information he had, was derived from a postscript in a Letter from him to me. Vizt.

A Sloop with flour has been received yesterday Evening for the use of the Prisoners here, but I am to desire, that no more flags of Truce may be sent by water, either up or down the River, without leave being previously obtained.

As to Cloathing, I have no doubt but Genl Howe has denied us the liberty of purchasing. This is now a subject of difference between us, and the design of our insisting that he shall victual his Troops in our hands by a certain day is to oblige him to consent to that measure. But it should not, in my Opinion, prevent him sending Cloathes to the Prisoners, especially as he had obtained my consent for the same, so long ago, as the last day of November, in consideration of his Assurances to permit a Commissary of Ours to

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go into Philadelphia with necessaries for our People in his hands. Matters being thus circumstanced and the conclusion of your Letter to Colo. Smith, directing the Officers to be secured till farther orders, either from the Board of War or from me, I have written to him to release and permit them to pursue their route. I have the honor, etc.<sup>9</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Valley Forge, January 27, 1778.

Sir: Your two Letters of the 24th Inst. came to hand. Before the receipt of the first, I had written to you upon the subject contained in it, in consequence of your Letter to the commanding Officer at Lancaster, which had been transmitted to me. As that will inform you fully, respecting the British Officers and Cloathing, I will not trouble you with a repetition of the matter. I must observe, however, that the number of Officers and Men who came out does not appear to me so very extraordinary, considering the various duties they have to perform and the amount of Waggons and necessaries they have in charge. The Officers are under parole and the party unarmed. Nor will the state of this Army admit large escorts to be detached, and if it were much more respectable, I should apprehend Two Officers sufficient to attend the Flag. I should have been happy, if the

9. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison and is addressed to Major General Gates, president of the Board of War, at York, Pa.

Officers and Cloathing had not been seized, as it destroys that confidence which should ever be had in passports and involves consequences of a delicate and interesting nature. In answer to the last clause of your Letter, respecting the detention of the Cloathing, I refer you to my Letter of yesterday by which you will perceive, that there is a particular agreement between Genl. Howe and myself, under the sanction of which they came out.

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I am much obliged by your polite request of my Opinion and advice on the Expedition to Canada and other occasions. In the present instance, as I neither know the extent of the Objects in view, nor the means to be employed to effect them, It is not in my power to pass any judgment upon the subject. I can only sincerely wish, that success may attend it, both as it may be advancive of the public good and on account of the personal Honor of the Marquis de la Fayette, for whom I have a very particular esteem and regard. Your Letter was delivered him in a little time after it came to my hands, and he proposes to set out for York Town to morrow.

Agreeable to your request I shall order Hazen's Regiment to march from Wilmington to this place, from whence it will immediately proceed towards Albany. As some particular purpose seems to be intended, by desiring this Regiment, I am induced to part with it, notwithstanding our force will illy bear the smallest diminution.

I am, etc.15

### **To FRANCIS HOPKINSON**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, January 27, 1778.

Sir: I received your favour of the 22d. instant by Captn. Alexander, to whom I have given an order to take several pieces of Cannon with a proper supply of Ammunition, that he, in conjunction with the other Gentlemen of the Navy, may endeavour to interrupt the Erieroy's Shipping in their passage up and down the River.

Having never found an opportunity of conveying the letter, which you some time ago sent to me for Mr. Duché, by such a Channel as I thought it would reach him, I return it to you again. The contents have not been made public. I am, etc.18

15. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison and is addressed to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, president of the Board of War.



18. Hopkinson's letter to Duché is dated Nov. 14, 1777, and is printed in Sparks's Writings of Washington, vol. 5, P. 478.

**To THE COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS WITH THE ARMY<sup>27</sup>**

[Head Quarters, January 29, 1778.]

Gentlemen: The numerous defects in our present military establishment, rendering many reformation and many new arrangements absolutely necessary, and Congress having been pleased to appoint you a Committee, in concert with me, to make and recommend such as shall appear eligible, in pursuance of the various objects expressed in their Resolution for that purpose; I have in the following sheets, briefly delivered my sentiments upon such of them as seemed to me most essential; so far as observation has suggested and leisure permitted. These are submitted to consideration and I shall be happy, if they are found conducive to remedying the Evils and inconveniences we are now subject to and putting the Army upon a more respectable footing. Something must be done, important alterations must be made; necessity requires that our resources should be enlarged and our system improved for without it, if the dissolution of the army should not be the consequence at least, its operations must infallibly be feeble, languid and ineffectual.

As I consider a proper and satisfactory provision for officers in a Manner, as the basis of every other regulation and arrangement necessary to be made; Since without officers no army can exist, and unless some measures be devised to place those

27. This committee, generally known as the committee of conference, had been chosen on January 10 as Francis Dana, Joseph Reed, Nathaniel Folsom, and John Harvie, together with three members of the Board of War, who were selected on January 12, *to wit*, Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin, and Col. Timothy Pickering. On January 20 Charles Carroll and Gouverneur Morris were added, after Gates, Mifflin, and Pickering

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were excused from acting. The committee held its sessions at Moore Hall, the house of William Moore, about two and a half miles north of the Valley Forge headquarters.

of ours in a more desirable situation, few of them would be able, if willing, to continue in it. I shall begin with a few reflections tending to prove the necessity.

### OF A HALF PAY AND PENSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT

A small knowledge of human nature will convince us, that, with far the greatest part of mankind, interest is the governing principle; and that almost every man is more or less, under its influence. Motives of public virtue may for a time, or in particular instances, actuate men to the observance of a conduct purely disinterested; but they are not of themselves sufficient to produce a persevering conformity to the refined dictates and obligations of social duty. Few men are capable of making a continual sacrifice of all views of private interest, or advantage, to the common good. It is vain to exclaim against the depravity of human nature on this account; the fact is so, the experience of every age and nation has proved it and we must in a great measure, change the constitution of man, before we can make it otherwise. No institution, not built on the presumptive truth of these maxims can succeed.

We find them exemplified in the American officers as well as in all other men. At the commencement of the dispute, in the first effusions of their zeal, and looking upon the service to be only temporary, they entered into it without paying any regard to pecuniary, or selfish considerations. But, finding its duration to be much longer than they at first suspected, and that instead of

deriving any advantage from the hardships and dangers, to which they were exposed, they on the contrary, were losers by their patriotism and fell far short even of a competency to supply their wants, they have gradually abated in their ardor; and with many, an intire disinclination to the service, under its present circumstances, has taken place. To this,

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in an eminent degree, must be ascribed the frequent resignations daily happening, and the more frequent importunities for permission to resign, and from some officers of the greatest merit. To this also may we ascribe, the apathy, inattention and neglect of duty, which pervade all ranks, and which will necessarily continue and increase while an officer instead of gaining any thing, is impoverished by his commission; and conceives he is conferring not receiving a favor, in holding it. There can be no sufficient tie upon Men possessing such sentiments. Nor can any method be adopted, to oblige those, to a punctual discharge of duty who are indifferent about their continuance in the service, and are often seeking a pretext to disengage themselves from it. Punishment, in this case will be unavailing; but when an officer's commission is made valuable to him, and he fears to lose it, you may then exact obedience from him.

It is not indeed consistent with reason or justice, to expect that one set of Men should make a sacrifice of property, domestic ease and happiness, encounter the rigors of the field, the perils and vicissitudes of war to obtain those blessings which every Citizen will enjoy, in common with them, without some adequate compensation. It must also be a comfortless reflection to any Man, that after

he may have contributed to securing the rights of his country at the risk of his life and the ruin of his fortune, there will be no provision made to prevent himself and family from sinking into indigence and wretchedness. Besides adopting some methods to make the provision for officers equal to their present exigencies, a due regard should be paid to futurity. Nothing, in my opinion, would serve more powerfully to reanimate their languishing zeal, and interest them thoroughly in the service, than a half pay and pensionary establishment. This would not only dispel the apprehension of personal distress, at the termination of the war, from having thrown themselves out of professions and employments, they might not have it in their power to resume; but would in a great degree, relieve the painful anticipation, of leaving their Widows and Orphans, a burthen on the charity of their country, should it be their lot to fall in its defence.

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I am earnest in recommending this measure, because I know it is the general wish and expectation; and that many Officers whom, upon every principle, we should wish to retain in the service are only waiting to see whether something of the kind will or will not take place to be determined in their resolutions either of staying in, or quitting it immediately; and I urge my sentiments with the greater freedom, because I cannot and shall not, receive the smallest benefit from the establishment, and can have no other inducement for proposing it, than a full conviction of its utility and propriety.

I am sensible, the expence will be a capital objection to it, but to this I oppose the necessity. The Officers are now discontented with their situation; if some generous expedient is not embraced to remove their discontent, so extensive a desertion of the service will ensue, and so much discouragement be east upon those who remain as must wound it in a very essential manner. Every thing that has this effect, has a tendency, at least to protract the war; and though dictated by a well intended frugality will, I fear, in the end, prove erroneous œconomy.

### OF COMPLETING THE REGIMENTS AND ALTERING THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

The necessity of the first, in the most expeditious manner possible, is too self evident to need illustration or proof, and I shall therefore only beg leave to offer some reflections on the mode. Voluntary enlistments seem to be totally out of the question; all the allurements of the most exorbitant bounties and every other inducement, that could be thought of, have been tried in vain, and seem to have had little other effect than to increase the rapacity and raise the demands of those to whom they were held out. We may fairly infer, that the country has been already pretty well drained of that class of Men, whose tempers, attachments and circumstances disposed them to enter permanently, or for a length of time, into the army; and that the residue of such men, who from different motives, have kept out of the army, if collected, would not augment our general strength in any

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proportion to what we require. If experience has demonstrated, that little more can be done by voluntary enlistments, some other mode must be concerted, and no other presents itself, than that of filling the Regiments by drafts from the Militia. This is a disagreeable alternative, but it is an unavoidable one.

As drafting for the war, or for a term of years, would probably be disgusting and dangerous, perhaps impracticable, I would propose an annual draft of men, without officers, to serve 'till the first day of January, in each year; That on or before the first day of October preceeding, these drafted Men should be called upon to reinlist for the succeeding year; and as an incitement to doing it, those being much better and less expensive than raw recruits, a bounty of twenty five dollars should be offered: That, upon ascertaining, at this period, the number of men, willing to re-engage, exact returns should be made to Congress of the deficiency in each regiment, and transmitted by them to the respective states, in order that they may have their several quotas immediately furnished, and sent on to Camp, for the service of the ensuing year, so as to arrive by, or before, the first day of January.

This method, though not so good as that of obtaining Men for the war, is perhaps the best our circumstances will allow; and as we shall always have an established corps of experienced officers, may answer tolerably well. It is the only mode, I can think of, for completing our batalions in time, that promises the least prospect of success; the accomplishment of which is an object of the

last importance; and it has this advantage, that the minds of the people being once reconciled to the experiment, it would prove a source of continual supplies hereafter.

Men drafted in this manner should not, in the first instance, receive any bounty from the public; which being solemnly enjoined upon each state, and a stop put to the militia substitution laws, would probably be attended with very happy consequences. A number of idle, mercenary fellows would be thrown out of employment, precluded from their

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excessive wages, as substitutes for a few weeks or months; and constrained to enlist in the Continental army. In speaking of abolishing the militia substitution laws, it is not meant to hinder a person, who might be drafted in the annual allotments, from procuring a substitute in his stead, himself in consequence being excused. This indulgence would be admissible, and considering all things, necessary, as there are many individuals, whose dispositions and private affairs would make them irreconcilably averse to giving their personal services, for so long a duration; and with whom it would be impolitic to use compulsion. The allowance of substitution, upon a smaller scale, in the occasional coming out of the militia, for a few Weeks, a month or two, is the thing meant to be reprobated. It is highly productive of the double disadvantage of preventing the growth of the Army, and depreciating our currency.

In the new establishment of a regiment, as apparent inconveniences result from the enemy's having no full

colonels in their army, distinctly such, to exchange for ours, in case of captivity, I would propose, that our battalions should be commanded by Lieutenant-colonels commandant, with the pay of colonel, and consist of the following officers and men: one lieutenant colonel commandant, one lieutenant Colonel, a major, nine captains, nine lieutenants, nine ensigns, an adjutant, quarter master, pay master; serjeant, drum and fife major, twenty seven serjeants, 18 drums and fifes, and five hundred and four rank and file: That these should be divided into eight companies: That a captain, lieutenant, ensign, three serjeants, two drums and fifes, and fifty six rank and file, should be selected from the whole to compose a company of light infantry; That the infantry from each brigade be commanded by a field officer belonging to it; if officers by the reduction of Corps and otherwise unprovided for, are not appointed to the commands; a mode preferable to that of drafting from the brigades, as a means of doing those Officers justice and because the brigades would miss the field officers, drawn from them for this purpose: And, That the whole be commanded by General officers from the line, chosen by the commander in

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Chief. This body would compose the flying army; and, in conjunction with a body of horse would become extremely formidable and useful.

The benefits arising from a superiority in horse, are obvious to those who have experienced them. Independent of such as you may derive from it in the field of action, it enables you, very materially, to controul the inferior and subordinate motions of an enemy, and to impede their knowledge of what you are doing, while

it gives you every advantage of superior intelligence and, consequently, both facilitates your enterprizes against them and obstructs theirs against you. In a defensive war as in our case it is peculiarly desirable; because it affords great protection to the country, and is a barrier to those inroads and depradations upon the inhabitants, which are inevitable when the superiority lies on the side of the invaders. The enemy fully sensible of the advantages, are taking all the pains in their power, to acquire an ascendancy in this respect,<sup>28</sup> to defeat which, I would propose an augmentation of our cavalry, by adding a lieutenant, serjeant and corporal and twenty two privates to each troop. The establishment will then be as follows,

1 Colonel

1 Lt. Colonel

1 Major

6 Captains

12 lieutenants

6 Cornets

1 Adjutant

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1 Qur Master

1 Sadler

6 farriers

6 Qur Master serjeants

all as usual except 6 additional lieutenants<sup>29</sup>

12 serjeants

30 Corporals

6 Trumpeters

324 privates

There are and will continue four regiments of cavalry, which composing a brigade, will require a Brigadier, Brigade-Major, Quarter master, Commissary and forage Master as usual. The Men

28. In Hamilton's first draft Washington added at this point "and from the Enemy's endeavour. to obtain a superiority."

29. In Hamilton's first draft Washington here added "excepting 6 addl. Lieutts."

for this service can easily be gotten: the providing horses and accoutrements will be found to suffer some difficulty, yet will not be impracticable. The procuring horses should be undertaken by judicious officers from each regiment, well skilled in them; and conducted, in such a manner as to occasion no interference with each other. Let Sheldon's purchases be confined to the Eastward of the North River; Moylan's between the North River and Susquehannah; Baylor's between Susquehannah and James River; and Blands to



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the Southward of that. The number of horses to be purchased by each, ought to be determined; and an average price limited, disclosed only to the purchaser, with a strict injunction to conceal it as much as possible; because, if once generally known, sellers would take advantages of it, and part with none under the limitation. The accoutrements to be provided in the same districts, and by the same persons; but as some of these districts abound more in manufacturers than others, all that can be engaged in each, in a certain stipulated time, ought to be secured, in order that the overplus, in one part, may supply the deficiency in another. And as these articles may be imported cheaper, and better, in quality, than they can be made here, I would advise that at least, fifteen hundred sets should be sent for to France, with directions to divide them in small parcels, and embark them in different vessels that we may have a probability of getting at least a part, and not run the risk of sustaining a total loss and disappointment, by adventuring the whole in one bottom.

### OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE ARMY

The establishment of a batalion being fixed, under the last head; it remains to ascertain the number of batalions in order to form a proper arrangement. The number of batalions now in the field from each state stand thus.

New Hampshire 3

Massachusetts 15

Rhode Island 2

Connecticut 8

New York 4

New Jersey 4

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Pennsylvania 12

Colo. W. Stewarts of do 1

49

Delaware 1

Maryland 7

Virginia 15

State do 1

Carolina 9

German Battalion 1

Hazens 1

Additional and parts 13

Total 97

By the foregoing list, it appears, that in regiments and parts of regiments, there are Ninety seven now in the field; but the state of them requires explanation. Out of Nine from North Carolina, by a return of the 31st. Ultimo, only 572 rank and file are fit for duty: These with 71 sick present and 137 on Command, make 780 rank and file, which, I suppose may be produced. The total number, rank and file, in the nine regiments is 1079; the difference is accounted for in sick, absent and on furlough; which is the only way, I am apprehensive they ever will be accounted for. From this defective state of them, I should think it advisable, to throw the rank and file of the nine regiments into two (they have been

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already reduced to three) and to send the supernumerary officers back to the state, to collect such men as, on various

pretences, were left behind and deserters: And aided by the whole efficiency of the State, voluntary enlistments being, as I said before, out of the question, to exert all their endeavours towards completing the seven other regiments, or such of them as Congress shall direct. I am the more induced to recommend this measure, from the possibility of the enemy's attempting a more southern expedition next campaign. They may do it in order to gain possession of the capital of another state, which will give reputation to their arms in Europe, distress our trade and abridge our supplies; at the same time will enable administration to avail themselves, in another instance, of the illusory idea, they endeavour to hold up to the nation, to keep their hopes alive and extract fresh contributions; That every State, whose capital they possess, is conquered. These new raised troops may, either, join this army, or aid South Carolina or Virginia, as circumstances shall point out.

It is needless to enter into a minute detail as to the precise state of the other troops: Let it suffice to say, that they bear too near an analogy to the specimen here given.

Virginia, I understand, though not from any direct authority, has resolved to draft towards the completion of her battalions; and as this mode seems to be the only one, calculated to answer the end, it is to be hoped, she will be able to furnish the full complement of fifteen, including the state battalion. What plan Maryland has fallen upon, or may adopt, to fill her battalions, I know not; but as the powers of government are with her in full vigor and the abilities of the State intirely adequate to the end, I think

her original quota ought to be depended upon. Delaware must undoubtedly contribute one battalion; no change having happened, since that portion was assigned her, sufficient to afford a plea for reducing it. In behalf of Pennsylvania, much may be said; the exhausted state of her regiments, her loss of capitol, and intestine divisions, ever destructive to the energy of government, may perhaps incapacitate her, for completing her thirteen

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regiments, now on foot. Suppose the number should be for the present, diminished to eight, and the state should exert herself to fill them in the first place. When this shall be accomplished, if her resources appear equal to any further efforts, she may proceed to raising the remaining five. New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire are fully competent to the quotas respectively required of them, and no abatement seems necessary with respect to either. We have reason to hope their exertions will keep pace with their abilities, and that they will take decisive measures to send their several proportions into the field.

I am at a loss what to propose, concerning the German batalion, Hazen's Regiment and the sixteen additional. Appertaining to no particular state or states, they will have no chance of being filled by drafts, and as little by any other means. They must either remain weak and imperfect corps, be adopted by the states or incorporated into each other and then, if possible, recruited: The first, upon every principle, ought not to be the case, and as the second would not be altogether eligible from the difficulty of

apportioning them, without dividing and subdividing the regiments, the third seems to be the expedient to which we must have recourse. Let Maryland take the German batalion wholly, as one of her eight, for she already claims a part of it; and then let the sixteen additional, none of which are strong, some extremely weak and others only partially organized, be thrown into nine. There is this number of them, which comparatively speaking, are tolerably respectable, and have undergone a good deal of hard service in the course of the last campaign. These, after having received the Men out of the reduced corps, ought to be licensed, though a barren experiment, to try what can be done by voluntary inlistments, throughout the Continent, at large. Hazen's regiment might be added to them and united in the same privilege.

If these propositions are approved, the whole number of batalions on the establishment, will be eighty, and the total amount of them if complete 40,320 rank and file.

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Upon this number of batalions, I shall make my arrangements. Whether full or not, they will require to be thrown into Brigades and divisions; these again into wings and lines; all of which, for the sake of order, harmony and discipline, should be under distinct commands, capable of moving either jointly or seperately, in the great Machine, as circumstances shall require. I would accordingly, to every four batalions, allow a Brigadier, to every three brigades a Major General, and to the grand army three Lieutenant Generals; one to command the right Wing, another

the left and a third, the second line. These three will always be necessary with the grand army, and unless it should be more divided next campaign, than we have reason to judge from present appearances, are all that will be requisite; yet it may be better to appoint four on account of contingent services.

If it should be deemed improper to reduce the number of Pennsylvania batalions,\* in the manner proposed, another Brigadier will be wanted; otherwise, Twenty two Brigadiers (two for the flying army) eight Major Generals (one for the flying army) and three Lieutenant Generals will be sufficient. To each Brigade, there should be a Quarter Master, Forage Master, Waggon Master and Commissary; also armourers, a traveling forge, and some artificers. In short, each Brigade should be an epitome of the great whole, and move by similar Springs upon a smaller scale.

\*Since writing the above, I hear the assembly of this state have passed a law to draft men for their batalions, and I have arranged the Army accordingly, in a schedule hereunto annexed.<sup>30</sup>

In a young Army, like ours, the Office of Inspector General, principally for the purpose of instituting and carrying into practice an uniform system of manual and manœuvres, must be extremely useful and advantageous. A number of assistants to this office will be required, as one man would be incapable of superintending, the practice of the rules laid down, throughout the Army; and unless this were carefully done, it would be of little

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avail to establish them. It would be proper, in my opinion, to have one to each Brigade; the benefits resulting from

30. This schedule probably was a copy of the "Arrangement of the Army for the Campaign 1778 and present state of the Battalions this 1st day of Jany. 1778," which is a 3-page tabular statement, in Washington's writing, filed in the *Washington Papers* at the end of January, 1778.

which, would greatly overballance the consideration of expence.

Another new institution, I should wish to see take place in the army, and from which signal advantages would flow, is that of a Provost-Marshalcy.<sup>31</sup> It should be composed of.

1 Capt. or Grand Provost, with the pay of dollars pr Month

4 Lieutenants, or Provost Marshals, with the pay of dollars each pr. Month to be stationed on the flanks and rear of the army.

1 Clerk, to register all official transactions of the corps, regulations for suttlers &c. As his business will be pretty extensive, and imply a degree of trust, he should have not less than dollars a Month.

1 Qur. Master serjeant, to draw provisions &c. with the same pay as others of the same denomination.

2 Trumpeters.

2 Serjeants.

5 Corporals, one to be with each officer

43 Provosts or privates

to have the same pay as is given in the horse.

#### 4 Executioners, with the pay of

The reason that the pay of this corps is rated so high, is that the offices of it are extremely troublesome; and require men worthy of trust and of great activity, to execute them, who would not be tempted by a less recompence, to undergo the drudgery and fatigue. It is also necessary the officers should have some rank, to enable them to maintain a proper degree of respect and command; for which purpose that of captain for the principal and lieutenant for his assistants will be sufficient. The intention of the corps requires, that the whole should

31. This provost-marshal organization was authorized by the resolves of May 27, 1778, which established the rearrangement of the army. The corps became known as the Marechaussée and was commanded by Capt. Bartholomew von Heer.

be on horseback, armed and accoutred in the same manner as light horsemen. And as there is a necessity for good men to be employed in this service, who cannot well be inlisted, they ought to be drafted from the brigades.

The business of this corps is to watch over the good order and regularity of the army, in camp, quarters, or on a march; to silence all quarrels, tumults and riots; detect and hinder every species of marauding, prevent straggling and other unsoldierlike licenses among the troops; to apprehend spies, or persons, who not being able to give a good account of themselves, may render them suspicious; to establish and enforce good regulations among the suttlers, who should therefore be subject to the rules prescribed them by the grand provost, and of whom he is to keep a register, frequently inspecting their conduct, and seeing that the articles, they offer for sale, are good in quality and at reasonable prices. These, and many other particulars, are comprehended in the duties of the Provost-

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Marshalcy; in the execution of which, continual patrols must be kept up, day and night, throughout the limits of the camp and its environs.

There are many little crimes and disorders incident to soldiery, which require immediate punishment and which from the multiplicity of them, if referred to Court Martials, would create endless trouble, and often escape proper notice: These, when soldiers are detected in the fact, by the provost marshals, they ought to have a power to punish on the spot; subject to proper limitations and to such regulations, as the commander in chief, according to customs and usages of

War, shall, from time to time, introduce.

Before I conclude this head, I shall recur a moment to the subject of altering the establishment of a batalion in the manner proposed under the preceding. Notwithstanding a company of light infantry is added to it, there will be a considerable reduction of officers, by having only two instead of three subalterns to a company; and this reduction will be greatly increased, if intire regiments are disbanded, and the fighting part of the staff taken from the line, not left separate and distinct as heretofore. It becomes an object of inquiry, what is to be done with these reduced officers. To turn them adrift, without some provision, though they insist on the privilege, whenever it suits them to continue no longer in it, of relinquishing the service, wears at least the appearance of hardship, if not of injury; and would, no doubt, be a subject of clamor and complaint with them all. With some, who may have provided and lain themselves out for a military life, it would be perhaps a real grievance. I see but one method of obviating the embarrassments on this score and that not altogether unexceptionable. It is to be presumed and fervently to be wished, that every batalion retained in service, will be officered by Gentlemen of the most deserving characters and best military qualifications in it, and that can be selected from other corps, belonging to the same state, which may happen to be dissolved, if any are. After this, should there remain any worthy officers, unprovided for, and that cannot be disposed of, in some useful capacity, they may be held on half pay, if not too numerous,



till vacancies should occur in the line of their own states. Others may be dismissed with an allowance of land, proportioned to their several ranks.

## OF RANK

Among the complicated causes of complaint in this army, none seems to have taken deeper root, nor to have given more general dissatisfaction than the lavish distribution of rank. No error can be more pernicious, than that of dealing out rank with too prodigal a hand. The inconveniences of it are manifest: It lessens the value and splendor of it, in some measure degrades it into contempt, breeds jealousies and animosities, and takes away one of the most powerful incitements to emulation.

To avoid this evil, in future, it is proposed, that such of the staff as are intitled to it and ought to be commissioned should be taken from the line. For instance, the Adjutant, Quarter Master and Pay Master of each regiment to be chosen from the regiment, they are to serve in; the two first from the subalterns, the other from the subalterns or captains, according to the fitness of the person. Each of these to enjoy double pay, but to hold no other rank, than he is vested with, by his station in the line, in which he is regularly to rise; the adjutant and quarter master ceasing to be such, when they arrive at the rank of Captain and the pay master when he attains to that of major. The Brigade-major and brigade Quarter Master to be officers from the Brigade, not exceeding the rank of Captain,

and to resign those offices when they obtain a majority. The future appointments of Aid de Camps to the Major and Lieutenant Generals to be from the line, and they to hold no other ranks, than their commissions there give them a claim to. But as many good officers are now acting in this capacity to the former, who originally belonged to the line, and have at this time no appointments there, the rule ought to have no retrospective operation with regard to those already created; who ought upon every principle to preserve their present rank.

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The Secretaries and Aid de Camps to the Commander in chief ought not to be confined to the line for plain and obvious reasons. The number which the nature and extent of his business require, in addition to the many drawn from the line to fill the different offices of the staff, when it is considered, that they ought all to be Men of abilities, may seem too large a draft upon the line. But a consideration still more forcible is, that in a service so complex as ours, it would be wrong and detrimental to restrict the choice; the vast diversity of objects, occurrences and correspondencies, unknown in one more regular and less diffusive, constantly calling for talents and abilities of the first rate; men who possess them ought to be taken, wherever they can be found. With respect to their rank those who are now in the station, ought in every point of view to retain that, which they now hold; some of them have been acting in these capacities a considerable length of time, others who quitted the line of the army to come into them, would in the common course of promotion have been at least as high as they now are, and almost

all of them have been in the service from an early period of the war; in future those who happen to be from the army ought only to hold their rank in it, and rise in course like others in a similar predicament; it is submitted whether those taken out of it ought to have any rank, and if any, what; also what shall be the pay in both cases.

The Quarter Master General and Adjutant General, as they fill places of the highest trust and importance and ought to be Gentlemen of the first military characters, should, if not of the line, have rank conferred upon them, and not less than that of colonel.

As it does not require military men, to discharge the duties of Commissaries, Forage Masters and Waggon Masters, who are also looked upon as the money making part of the army, no rank should be allowed to any of them, nor indeed to any in the departments merely of a civil nature. Neither is it, in my opinion proper, though it may seem a trivial and inconsequential circumstance, that they should wear the established uniforms of the army, which ought to be considered as a badge of military distinction.

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These regulations will add weight and dignity to the fighting part of the army, render commissions valuable, and bringing rank into the estimation it ought to bear, will make it a stimulous to bravery and enterprize. At the same time, they will ease the public of a present, and in case of half pay, of a considerable future, expence.

In speaking of rank, as a spur to enterprise, I am led, by the way to hint an idea, which may be improved and turned to no small advantage. This is the institution of honorary rewards,

differing in degree, to be conferred on those, who signalize themselves, by any meritorious actions, in proportion to the magnitude and brilliancy of the atchievement. These should be sacred to the purpose of their institution, and unattainable by loose recommendations, or vague, though arrogating pretension; given only upon authentic vouchers of real desert, from some proper board. Congress have already adopted the idea, in particular instances; but it were to be wished, it could be extended to something more general and systematic. I have not sufficiently employed my thoughts upon the subject, to digest them into a proposition, as to the nature variety and extent of these rewards; but I would in general observe, that they may consist in things of very little cost, or real value, and that the more diversified they are, the better. If judiciously and impartially administered, they would be well calculated to kindle that emulous love of glory and distinction, to which may be imputed far the greater part of the most illustrious exploits performed among mankind, and which is peculiarly necessary to be cherished and cultivated in a military life.

### OF PROMOTION

Irregular promotions have also been a pregnant source of uneasiness, discord and perplexity in this army. They have been the cause of numerous bickerings and resignations among the officers, and have occasioned infinite trouble and vexation to the Commander in Chief. To rectify mistakes, introduced by accident,

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inadvertency, the interference of state appointments, or other means, employed much of the time of the General officers, in the course of the last campaign, and to less purpose than could be wished. We find, that however injuriously to the rights of others, an officer obtains irregular promotion, he is not the less tenacious of it; but it is with the utmost difficulty, if at all, he can be convinced of the propriety of doing an act of justice by abandoning his claim; though he will confess there was no just cause in the first instance, for giving him the preference. But as it did happen, he pretends his honor would be wounded, by suffering another, who is, *in fact*, his inferior, to come over him; not considering how much that other was injured by the act, which gave him the superiority.

This, however, shows how indispensably necessary it is, to have some settled rule of promotion, universally known and understood and not to be deviated from, but for obvious and incontestible reasons. Extraordinary promotions founded upon acknowledged worth on the one hand, and acknowledged demerit on the other, would rather excite emulation than murmurs. The prospect of not being shackled to the tedious gradations of ordinary succession, would teach the good officer to aspire to an excellence, that should entitle him to more rapid preferment; and the fear of being superceded with dishonor, would teach indifferent ones to exert more activity, diligence and attention, than they otherwise would; were they left in a listless security, certain of enjoying the honors and emoluments of progressive rank, let their conduct be ever so

undeserving. But this is a matter, that ought to be handled with the utmost caution and delicacy. Nothing is more alarming and prejudicial, than an injudicious infraction of rank. It discourages merit and fomentis discontent and disorder. No departure from the established maxims of preferment is warrantable, which is not founded upon the most apparent and unequivocal reasons.

With respect to the rule of promotion, proper to be observed; as I believe it to be consistent with the general sense and sentiment of the Army, I would propose,

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That promotion should be regimental to the rank of Captain inclusively, and from that, in the line of the state to the rank of Brigadier inclusively; proceeding, from that, in the line of the army at large.

The reason that promotions in the line of a state, end with the Brigadier, and are extended from that to the line of the army, is, that, though the principle of having regard to the proportion of troops, furnished by each state, in the appointments of general officers, be in the main equitable and politic; yet the end proposed from it will be sufficiently answered by limiting it to the creation of Brigadiers. If carried further, will be injurious and become an incurable source of inquietude and disgust. When once a man is made a general officer, his circle of expectation widens, and he transfers his views from the line of his state to the line at large. He looks for promotion according to his seniority in the scale of general officers, and will not brook being overleaped

by his juniors and inferiors, merely because he had the ill fortune to enter the service of his country in a smaller or less populous state than they. These feelings and sentiments are universal, and we have already, in some instances, experienced their operation.

As four regiments, in the arrangement proposed, are required to constitute a Brigade, and some states send less than that number to the field, a mode should be fallen upon to place this matter upon determinate principles, so as to prevent disputes hereafter. At present, no difficulty can arise; because all the states, Delaware excepted, have Brigadiers; but time and accident may remove these, and give rise to contention, unless some rule is previously fixed and declared.

It appears to me absolutely essential, that Congress, the board of war or some other body, or person, should exercise the sole power, when once the states have sent their Regiments into the field, of giving and receiving commissions, filling vacancies and the like. If this should not be the case, I fear, the confusion will be endless. Erroneous promotions will probably be made, as heretofore, commissions antedated, officers

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dissatisfied, time lost in transmitting returns from one end of the Continent to the other, and waiting the arrangements upon them, the wheels of the whole machine, in consequence, clogged and disordered, and infinite trouble incurred in putting them to rights again.

### OF CLOATHING THE ARMY

In regard to cloathing, experience has evinced, that the mode of providing hitherto in practice, is by no means adequate to the end; and that unless our future efforts are more effectual, it will be next to impossible to keep an army in the field. I am in hopes that valuable consequences will accrue from a resolution of Congress of the 22d of November, directing

That the several states from time to time exert their utmost endeavours to procure, in addition to the allowance of cloathing heretofore made by Congress, supplies of blankets &c. for the comfortable subsistence of the Officers and Soldiers of their respective batalions.

As this puts the business into a greater variety of hands, than it has heretofore been in, and under the providence of a more diffusive attention, besides exciting a laudable rivalry, and operating upon the attachments of the different states, it will probably, be not a little instrumental in bringing us the needed supplies. But it is not an expedient that can be relied on altogether; of which, I doubt not, Congress are fully sensible and will only consider it as an auxiliary to their exertions. Indeed with several states which happen to be more or less the theatres of the war, and labor under other local impediments, it would be impracticable to furnish but a very small part of their proportion.

For my own part (with all deference I speak it) I have little conception, that our extensive wants can be completely satisfied, in any other way, than by national or governmental contracts, between Congress and the Court of France. If we are to depend

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wholly upon the resources of our mercantile credit, they must from the nature of things be too limited and contingent. While the seas are crowded with the British navy, and no foreign maritime power is employed in the protection of our trade, the precariousness of remittances from this Continent must be so great, as to destroy, or, at least, sicken our commercial credit; and make it neither the interest, nor within the abilities of private individuals, to adventure so largely upon that foundation, as our necessities demand.

It is not in my power to judge with certainty, what terms we may be upon with the French Court, what may have been already attempted, or may be now negotiating, in the matter here suggested. Perhaps the project of national contracts is not practicable; but, if it is, it would certainly be our interest to embrace it. Besides placing our supplies, in so essential an article, on a sure and unfailing foundation, it would cement the connexion between the two countries, and, if discovered, prove a new and powerful topic of hostility between France and Britain. At the same time, I do not think, that the fear of a discovery, from an unwillingness on the part of France, to force on an immediate war, supposing it to exist, need be any insuperable obstacle. Things might be conducted in such an indirect and discreet manner, as to make them go on, in all appearance as they do at present, and render a detection of the part the government bore in the affair, morally impossible.

The resolution, before cited, recommends to the respective states, the appointment of one or more persons to dispose

of the articles (procured) to the officers and soldiers, in such proportions as the General officers from the respective states, commanding in the army, shall direct, and at such reasonable prices, as shall be assessed by the Cloathier General or his deputy and be in just proportion to the Wages of the officers and soldiers, charging the surplus to the cost of the United States: adding that all cloathing hereafter to be supplied to the officers and soldiers of the Continental army, out of the public stores of the United States, beyond the bounties already granted, shall be charged at the like prices.

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The regulation contained in this clause is very Wholesome, generous and equitable. It will give great satisfaction to the army and conduce to removing the difficulties stated in the first section of these remarks, arising from the insufficiency of the present provision for officers. Nor do I know whether it admits of any improvement, by being made more definite. As the criterion of reasonableness in the prices seem to lie with the Cloathier General, or deputy, it may perhaps be liable to uncertainty and abuse, and may be the subject of dispute between them and the Officers. If to prevent this, a catalogue of rates could be established as the standard, it would be desireable; but perhaps the great difference and the variety in the quality and kinds of goods, may not admit of such a Measure.

It will of course be necessary for each state to have agents for importing and purchasing goods, towards its quota of supplies; and the Cloathier General should have a deputy in every state, for purchasing all overplus articles wanted in his

department, provided that effectual measures be taken by each state for preventing any competition between their agents or the Cloathier General and his agents, who are severally directed to observe the instructions of the respective states, relative to the prices of cloathing purchased within such state.<sup>32</sup>

There should also be a sub-clothier or clerk from every state, constantly with the army; to receive and distribute the cloathing, see that the goods brought correspond with the invoices, and that the issues are made conformable to some general rule established, to do justice to the public, to regiments and to individuals.

The rule I would propose for issuing and distributing cloathing is this; That the captains of companies in the first place give certificates, containing the names of his Men, with the particular wants of each: That these be digested into a regimental return signed by the officer commanding the regiment: That the pay Master draw the cloathing, lodging the regimental return, so signed, with the Clothier as a Voucher for the delivery, who is to keep



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an account with the regiment for the same: That the paymaster, retaining the certificates for his own government, distribute the cloathing to the Men, agreeable to them, taking their receipts and keeping an exact account with every individual; which he can easily do, as he is supposed to have accounts open for their Monthly pay: And that all cloathing delivered to the Men be given credit for in the pay rolls, with accounts signed by the sub-clothiers, annexed, for the information of the Pay Master General.

To make soldiers look well and bestow proper

32. The resolves of Nov. 22, 1777. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

attention and care upon their cloathes, they ought to receive them at stated periods. This gives a taste for decency and uniformity and makes the Officers regardful of the appearance of the men; a matter of no small moment in an Army, as tending to promote health, and foster a becoming pride of dress; which raises soldiers in their own esteem and makes them respectable to their enemy.

The periods I would fix upon for delivery are on the first days of June and January. In June should be given a waistcoat with sleeves, flannel, if to be had, two pair of linnen overalls one shirt, a black stock of hair or leather, a small round hat bound and a pair of shoes. In January, a waistcoat to be worn over the former, close in the skirts and double breasted resembling a sailors to have a collar and cuff of a different color, in order to distinguish the regiments, a pair of breeches, woolen overalls, yarn stockings, shirt, woolen cap, and a blanket, when really necessary. Watchcoats ought, if possible, to be provided for sentinels. Whatever might be furnished more than these, the soldier ought to have stopped out of his pay, upon the terms fixed by Congress, in their late resolve: A list of the cloathing to be kept by the commanding officer of each company, an inspection into them made at least once a Week, and punishment inflicted, or restitution made, for every article missing unless well accounted for. If it could be done, which is much to be doubted, it would be

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well to discriminate the troops of each state, by the colour of their cloathes and each regiment by that of the collar and cuff.

If this plan could be adopted, and a quantity of supernumerary articles laid in, for occasional demands, our men would appear infinitely better, be much healthier, and the army a great deal stronger, than it commonly is.

The Clothier General ought to be authorised and directed to enter into contracts, for as large quantities as possible, of shoes and stockings to be manufactured in the Country. These are articles that can least be dispensed with, and the deficiency of which we have most severely felt. A Mr. Henry of Lancaster, I am told would contract for one, or two hundred thousand pair of shoes, annually, to be paid for in raw hides. The number of cattle killed for the consumption of the army, enables us to make this contract to great advantage.

### OF THE QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

In this department, are comprehended, Forage Masters, waggon masters, artificers &c. with all their appendages. It is a department of great trust and magnitude, on the due administration of which all the operations of an army essentially depend. The person who fills it, ought to be a military character, a man of abilities, of business and activity, well versed in the resources of the country and of sufficient prudence and rectitude, to exercise his office, in drawing the necessary supplies, in a manner least distressing to the inhabitants.

His duty requiring him to be almost constantly with

the army, to see and know its wants, superintend the movements of his department in the different branches, and to prevent or rectify the abuses that may be creeping into it, he will stand in need of assistants, to execute the business abroad under his direction. It is not easy to ascertain the number of these assistants, that will be required: circumstances

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vary and must govern. But I cannot forbear observing, that some measures ought to be taken, to restrain that extravagant rage of deputation, now too prevalent among us. It has served to create a number of mere sinecures, and to render the execution of every office more perplexed, more expensive and less satisfactory than formerly, both to the army and country.

I should imagine, that a great part of the business of this department might be managed by contracts with people capable of performing them and bound by sufficient securities. This would unburthen the public of large sums now paid in stationary wages, often for temporary purposes, and would perhaps answer the end of supplies better. Standing wages are very apt to beget indolence and inattention, and commonly continue an incumbrance, when the cause, that gave rise to appointments, ceases to exist, from the difficulty of throwing off the persons to whom they were given; on which account they ought to be avoided, whenever any point can be effected without them.

I am also unacquainted with the number of persons, the Quarter Master General may find it necessary to employ in camp or elsewhere, as storekeepers, clerks, and the like; but

under the [head?] of these remarks, I have given my opinion of all the assistant Quarter Masters required in the subordinate duties of the office in Camp. More than these should not be allowed. Division Quarter Masters, Forage and Waggon Masters should be abolished.

Who may be in contemplation to fill the place of Quarter Master General is as yet to me unknown,<sup>33</sup> and equally indifferent, provided he be a fit person. But in making the appointment, not a moments time should be lost: The least procrastination will be extremely prejudicial, as the season is already far advanced, which we ought to be improving in preparations for the next campaign.<sup>34</sup> Everything is tube done; the old waggons to be repaired, new ones provided, horses and pack saddles procured, Bell tents

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for arms and tents for the Men, haversacks and knapsacks made, tools of different kinds prepared, and artificers and waggoners engaged.

And here I shall take occasion to declare, that however inconvenient it may be to the Quarter masters to provide, or expensive to the public to pay for waggoners, it ought nevertheless, at all events, to be done. Soldiers are drafted for waggoners and many other purposes, by which their services in the line are intirely superseded, while they actually compose a part of our numbers, and appear on the returns to compose part of our strength. This may be tolerated in quarters or in a season of inaction, though even then the soldiers would be better employed, in learning the duties of their profession, but it ought not to be submitted to in the progress of the campaign, as has been of late the unvariable practice.

33. Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin, Quartermaster General of the Continental Army, had resigned Nov. 7, 1777.

34. Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene was appointed Quartermaster General of the Continental Army by Congress Mar. 2, 1778; he served until Sept. 30, 1780.

Several new regulations, will I believe be necessary in the Forage department, the particulars of which, the Gentleman at the head of it, will be best able to point out.

One thing I shall observe, that the manner of paying the Forage master has been a subject of discussion. It has been suggested that the allowing a commission, instead of a fixed determinate pay, opens a wide door to fraud and peculation. In mentioning this not the least insinuation is intended to the prejudice of the Gentleman now acting in this capacity, it is merely hinted as a matter worth consideration on general principles. I think however it may be safely asserted, that the assistant forage masters are not, in general so accurate as they ought to be, in receiving or delivering forage, and that, depending too much upon

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the farmers reports and their own conjectures, the public pays for much more than they receive.

We have to lament that we are suffering exceedingly from a scarcity of forage; an article not less essential to the well being of an army, than that of provisions. Should we be able to shift through the winter, this want will be no small obstacle and delay to our operations in the spring; especially, as we are exhausting the small stock now on the spot, which will probably be the immediate scene of them. We have numbers of Horses dying daily, for the want of provender; what then must become of them, when it grows scarcer, and the distance to fetch it greater? How are magazines to be formed under these

circumstances? And without Magazines, how are our horses to be supported in the early part of the next campaign; when their numbers shall be greatly augmented? These are serious questions, not easy of solution, and are proposed, that every exertion may be made to avert an evil of no small consequence.

A Waggon Master General is a necessary officer, and there would be a great saving to the public, if the duties of the office were discharged by an active careful man, who would make a judicious choice of deputies, and not be himself above his business, as has been the case with most of those heretofore in this line. They have been apt to indulge fantastical notions of rank and importance; and assume titles very inapplicable to their stations; which have served to destroy a great part of their usefulness; and make them the objects of general contempt and resentment. This inconvenience must be obviated in future, by allowing no rank to any of them, from the highest to the lowest.

The number of Assistants requisite cannot be precisely ascertained, as it must depend upon the number of waggons. There must be one to each brigade to superintend the baggage waggons; but how many will be wanted to take charge of forage, provisions and for a variety of other purposes, I am at a loss to judge. This must be left to the quarter master general of whose department this is a branch and to the waggon master general,

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who is the immediate agent. One deputy however to every twenty waggons appears to me fully sufficient.

The men employed in this capacity should be plain, sober, diligent Men, acquainted with the management of horses and waggons, and untainted with absurd fancies of gentility; who would understand the end and design of their appointment, and not consider the means of making themselves useful, as a degradation of their imaginary dignity.

I shall close this head with an observation on the mode, hitherto in practice, of estimating and paying for damages, done by the army in quarters, or in the field; which appears to me objectionable, on several accounts. The payments have usually been made, on certificates of appraisement by farmers or other persons in the neighbourhood of the parties injured, chosen by themselves, and whenever the accounts were presented and there was money in hand to pay them.<sup>35</sup> This mode is unequal and gives the injured party an evident advantage over the public; and has no doubt in many instances been attended with gross impositions. Besides this defect, it would probably promote the service and be productive of more regularity; if a fixed time was appointed, when these payments should be made. There would not be such frequent large drafts upon the Quarter Master, in the most active part of a campaign, when he wants money for more pressing exigencies, and the entries of his disbursements might be made with more order and exactness, if these were deferred to a time of greater leisure. It is submitted, in the first place whether the appointment of two, or more persons would not be proper to accompany

35. In what seems to be the first draft of this letter, in Alexander Hamilton's writing, is the following, in Washington's writing, which appears to have been intended for insertion at approximately this point, but was afterwards discarded:

“Among the many hardships which the Inhabitants, who happen to live in the rout of an army experience, is that of destruction of Fences; wch. in spite of all the vigilance lance and care that can be used will, and in some cases must, from necessity, be taken for firing, to the great detriment of the proprietor, or ultimately to the Public, and no method has yet

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been adopted to estimate the damage by any just rule, or any rule at all, by which means the sufferer is left to ascertain his own loss or, which amounts nearly to the same thing, get two of his neighbours who either are, or expect to be in the same predicament to do this which involves the public, if she pay it, in great"

the army constantly, for the purpose of ascertaining damages, with a like number of persons, chosen by the party interested; whose certificates should be a sufficient justification to the Quarter Master, for paying them; and, in the second place, what time or times would be proper to satisfy demands of this nature. Perhaps two different periods would be best, both in the interval of tranquillity; one a little after the entrance of the army into Winter Quarters, and the other just before the opening of the campaign.

### OF THE COMMISSARY'S DEPARTMENT

This department has been all along in a very defective and for some time past, in a very deplorable situation. One important change has already taken place in it; since which it has been with the utmost difficulty we were able to keep the army together. Whether this proceeded from the revolution being ill-timed, or too great, from the difficulties in the way of executing the office being multiplied, or from the present Gentleman, at the head of it, not having yet had leisure to digest his plan and form his connexions, I shall not undertake to determine. But unless a very considerable alteration shortly takes place, I see no prospect of adequate supplies for the succeeding campaign. To attempt supplying the army from hand to Mouth (if I may be allowed the phrase) scarcely ever having more than two or three days provisions beforehand, and sometimes being as much in arrears, is a dangerous and visionary experiment. We shall ever be liable to experience want in the most critical conjunctures, as we

have frequently done heretofore; and to suspend or forego the most interesting movements, on account of it.

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Whether the first establishment of this department, the present, or the mode of supplying the army by contract, at certain stipulated rates, be preferable; is a question not for me to decide, though well worth a strict and candid examination. But I shall not scruple, in explicit terms to declare, that unless ample magazines are laid up in the course of this winter and the approaching spring, nothing favourable is to be looked for, from the operations of the next campaign; but our arms, enfeebled by the embarrassments of irregular and fluctuating supplies of provisions, will reap no other fruits than disgrace and disappointment. To obviate this, no possible exertion should be omitted; the ablest and best qualified men in the several states, whence provisions are drawn, should be called forth to aid in the matter; such as are acquainted with the resources of the country and may have been conversant in business of the kind.

The choosing of fit places for Magazines in defensive war, is equally momentous and difficult. Expence and hazard are naturally incident to them; because the possible movements of an enemy must ever be conjectural and it is precarious, when, where and, often, how they are to be removed. According to present appearances, magazines any where in the rear of the army from Lancaster to the North River would not be amiss, and the more numerous they are, the better; as their mutiplicity, decreasing the importance of each, would leave no one a sufficient object of enterprise;

enhance the trouble of destroying them, and lessen the labour and expence of forming them in the first instance.

Whether the Commissaries should be dependent upon the Quarter masters, for teams, or be empowered to provide for themselves, is a matter they can perhaps best settle between themselves. But it is necessary they should come to some agreement or determination upon the subject, to remove the inconveniences hitherto incurred on this score; the Commissaries having frequently imputed the deficiency of supplies to a want of the means of transportation.



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It is a point of prodigious consequence, and in which we have been amazingly deficient, that vinegar, vegetables and soap should be regularly and abundantly furnished to the army; nothing contributing, more than this, to the health, comfort and contentment of soldiers. Certainly, there are no insurmountable obstacles to doing it; and if not, no pains should be spared to accomplish so valuable an end.

A ration should be more precisely defined than it now is, and the quantity of spiritous liquors allowed the soldier, fixed. It should also be considered, whether any and what quantity should be allowed officers at the public expence; at all events, the Commissaries should be obliged to provide for them, if at their own charge, as they would otherwise have no opportunity of getting it, and in the hard and fatiguing service they pass through, it is indispensable, even to the most temperate men.

### OF THE HOSPITAL DEPARTMENT

There ever has been and, I fear will continue, difficulties and imperfections in this department. What they are particularly, or whence arising, it is not in my power minutely to enter into, as I have neither had leisure nor opportunity to examine its present constitution with a critical eye. One powerful reason, no doubt, of its not producing so fully the advantages to be hoped for, from it, is the extreme scarcity of proper supplies for the accomodation of the sick.

But one thing, which has had a very pernicious influence, is the continual jealousies and altercations, subsisting between the hospital and regimental surgeons. They seem always to be at variance, and recriminating the sufferings of the sick upon each other. The Regimental surgeons complain that for want of medicines and other necessities, they are disabled from giving that assistance in slight cases, and in the first stages of more dangerous complaints, which would serve to check their progress to maturity, and save the lives of the soldiery: The hospital surgeons reply, that their stores are incapable of bearing

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the excessive drafts, which the profusion and carelessness of the regimental surgeons would make upon them, if indulged in their demands.

I shall not attempt to decide the merits of this dispute; nor can I conceive any adequate mode of adjusting the difference. But one would imagine, it might not be impossible to fix some general rule of allowance, by which the supplies to regimental surgeons might be regulated; and to make them accountable for the right and œconomical application of what they received.

At all events, as the accomodation of the sick and the preservation of men's lives are the first and great objects to be consulted; the regimental surgeons ought not to be destitute of a reasonable quantity of medicines and other conveniencies, of which the sick stand in need. The ill effects of it are many and glaring. Either men, at every slight indication of disease must be sent away to distant hospitals, and the army unnecessarily deprived of the services of numbers, who, if the means were at hand, might in a day or two be restored; or they must remain without proper assistance, till their diseases confirm themselves and with regard to many, get beyond the power of cure.

Other ill consequences, that have attended the sending so many men away, to a distance from the army, are desertions and the waste of arms and cloathing; for which reasons, it ought to be avoided as much as possible. To prevent these evils, as far as it can be done, a field Officer is stationed at each hospital, to see the arms of the soldiers carefully deposited at their admission into it, take care of them in their convalescent state, and send them on to join their regiments, under proper Officers so soon as they are fit for duty.

### OF THE PAY MASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

This department is well conducted so far as depends upon the Gentleman at the head of it; but the want of money, which too frequently happens, is extremely injurious to our affairs.

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It is unnecessary to observe, that besides feeding and cloathing a soldier well, nothing is of greater importance than paying him with

punctuality; and it is perhaps more essential in our army, than in any other, because our Men are worse supplied and more necessitous; and the notions of implicit subordination, not being as yet, sufficiently ingrafted among them, they are more apt to reason upon their rights and readier to manifest their sensibility of any thing, that has the appearance of injustice to them; in which light they consider their being kept out of their pay, after it is due. Nor does the evil end here; the inhabitants, who through choice, accident, or necessity, have any pecuniary concerns with the army, finding themselves frequently disappointed in the payments they have a right to expect, grow dissatisfied and clamorous; the credit of the army, and which is nearly the same thing, the credit of the continent is impaired, our supplies of course are impeded, and the price of every article we want, raised.

This circumstance is not among the least causes of the depreciation of our currency.

### OF THE COMMISSARY OF MUSTERS' DEPARTMENT

The duties of this office are, I believe, discharged with fidelity and care by the Gentleman at the head of it. No complaint has ever come to my ear, either of him, or his deputies.

### OF THE COMMISSARY OF PRISONERS' DEPARTMENT

The business of this department, as far as I am yet capable of judging, is in good hands and going on in a proper train.

### OF AUDITORS OF ACCOUNTS

The want of such an institution has been much felt, and I am very happy it is at length adopted. The sooner the gentlemen appointed enter upon the execution of their office, the better, as much necessary business waits their regulating hand. The public has

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sustained a loss of many thousands, which might have been prevented, by the negligence, dishonesty and death of numberless officers.

Having run through the different distributions of the army, as composed of horse and foot, with all the departments depending thereon; and offered such remarks as occurred to me on the several subjects, I proceed to the mention of two departments commonly considered as separate and distinct, the Artillery and Engineering.

### OF THE ARTILLERY DEPARTMENT

This department, if the arrangements and measures in contemplation, meet with proper countenance and support, bids fair to be upon a very respectable establishment. A plan was agreed upon, not long since, between General Knox, and myself, for the formation of four batalions, which was intended to be presented to Congress; that, if approved by them, it might be recommended to the several states: It is now submitted to the consideration of the Committee.

We have at this time, three imperfect batalions of Artillery in the field, besides some detached companies which have

never been regularly incorporated. These together make 1370, including officers; to which, Harrison's batalion of Virginia being added, would amount to 1970. The deficiency of the four batalions on this state, will be 910, which, it is proposed, should be raised by the different states, agreeable to the following arrangement:

Virginia, Harrison 10 Companies at 60 each. 600 Maryland to raise 2 do do 120 A batalion of 12 Companies 720 Pensylvania, Proctor 8 present 251 to raise 229 480 Jersey, Clark and Randall 2 do 55 to raise 65 120 raised at large, Lee, Porter, Jones to be thrown into 2 95 Wanting 25 120 720 Connecticut &c., Lamb Present 399 New York, Beauman & Doughty 2 Companies present 73 to raise 47 120 New Hampshire to raise 2 do 120 Rhode Island do 1 60 wanting for the batalion 21 1 batalion 720 Massachusetts, Crane 12 Companies 497 to raise 223 1 batalion 12 Companies 720 Four batalions Amtg. to 2880

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In the above are included all the officers, except the brigadier, field and staff officers, and if completed would

prevent the necessity of the pernicious practice of drafting from the batalions.

General Knox communicated to me, more than two months ago an estimate of Ordnance and Ordnance stores, which he had prepared to send to the board of war, for the supplies of the next campaign agreeable to their request. Nothing more is necessary, than an inquiry what has been done in consequence.

I shall take the liberty in this place to give it as my opinion, that any arsenal or depository of stores at Albany, in the present situation of the North River, is improper. It would be too easily accessible and exceedingly liable to be surprised and destroyed. Indeed it ought to be a general rule to have every kind of magazines as far advanced into the interior parts of the country, and as remote from the sea coasts, or from the sides of Navigable, rivers, as the nature and design of them will permit. We have seen the effects of not attending duly to this precaution.

### OF THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Gentleman at the head of this department appears to be a man of science, knowledge in his profession and zeal in the cause. He complains, that he has not assistant Engineers enough, to execute the various duties of his office, and wishes for an augmentation of the number. He also proposes that three companies of workmen should be formed to be instructed in the fabrication of all kinds of field-works, so far as relates to the manual and

mechanical part; whose business it should be to teach the fatigue parties to execute the works with celerity and exactness, which could not otherwise be expected from men entirely unpracticed in the matter: These companies, he would have to consist of a Captain, three lieutenants, four serjeants, four corporals and sixty privates each: The commissioned officers to be intelligent and skilled in some branches of the Mathematics;

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the non-commissioned officers to be sober sensible men, and capable of writing a legible hand, and the whole corps to consist of Men of good characters, of diligence and integrity. In consideration of these qualifications, and the extra-duty, confinement and hazard, they must encounter, being always foremost in danger, to repair the injuries done any fortification by the enemy's fire, and to prosecute works in the face of it, the corps is to have extraordinary pay. This proposition appears reasonable and promises a degree of utility that outweighs the cost.

These companies, if formed, are to be solely under the direction of the Chief Engineer, and to have the care of all the intrenching tools of the army.

### CONCLUSION

I shall now in the last place beg leave to subjoin a few Matters unconnected with the general subject of these remarks, or not recollected in their proper places to which the attention of the Committee is requested. What is to be done with the foreign

officers who have been commissioned and never designated to any particular command, and who cannot, without displacing others, be brought into the line? Such of them as possess a competency of military knowledge and are otherwise men of character, I have sometimes thought, if they understood enough of our language, might be employed as Assistant inspectors. At other times, I have judged it best, if practicable, to form them into a corps by themselves, but most of them being field Officers, the difficulty of getting men for such a corps, unless deserters and prisoners were inlisted (which I have ever looked upon as impolitic) appeared to me an insurmountable objection.

The enemy have set every engine at work, against us, and have actually called savages and even our own slaves to their assistance;<sup>36</sup> would it not be well, to employ two or three hundred indians against General Howe's army the ensuing campaign? There is a Gentleman now in camp, who would, I imagine, be able to bring half that number of Cherokees, and i should think the Reverend Mr. Kirkland might be able to influence a like

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number of the Northern tribes. Such a body of indians, joined by some of our Woodsmen, would probably strike no small terror into the British and foreign troops, particularly the new comers. The good resulting from the measure, if these savages can be kept in the field at so great a distance from their native haunts, would more than compensate for the trouble and expence they might cost us.

Colo. Morgan, when he left camp, desired to know

36. On Jan. 2, 1778, Brig. Gen. James Mitchell Varnum suggested throwing the two Rhode Island regiments into one and sending the then supernumerary officers back to the State to obtain recruits. "It is imagined that a Batalion of Negroes can be easily raised there. Should that Measure be adopted, or recruits obtained on any other Principle, the Service will be advanced." Varnum's letter is in the *Washington Papers*. (See Washington's letter to Gov. Nicholas Cooke, Jan. 2, 1778, *ante*.)

whether he might engage any good riflemen to serve during the next campaign in the light corps. He thinks he should be able to procure many, under assurances, that they would serve with him and be dismissed at the end of the campaign.

The difficulty of getting waggoners and the enormous wages given them, would tempt one to try any expedient to answer the end on easier and cheaper terms. Among others, it has occurred to me, whether it would not be eligible to hire Negroes in Carolina, Virginia and Maryland for the purpose. They ought however to be freemen, for slaves could not be sufficiently depended on. It is to be apprehended they would too frequently desert to the enemy to obtain their liberty; and for the profit of it, or to conciliate a more favorable reception, would carry off their waggon-horses with them.

A resolve of Congress of the 19th instant, provide that all continental officers prisoners with the enemy, either while in confinement with them, or on parole among us, "so long as they continue officers of the United States," should be entitled to their pay and rations, liable to a deduction for what they may have received while present with the enemy; and

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that all flying camp or militia officers should be entitled to the same while in confinement with them only. This resolve excludes from pay all officers liberated on parole, who have not actual appointments in the Continental army; will it not be deemed a hardship and injustice to such officers; especially to those, who merely from their absence, have been neglected

in arrangements posterior to their capture, as has been too much the case? While they continue prisoners, whether in possession of the enemy, or out on parole, they can have little opportunity of prosecuting any business for a livelihood, and must be in distressful situation, unless they have a private fortune sufficient to maintain them.

It has in many instances happened, that officers in captivity have been omitted in promotions made in their absence; upon which a question has arisen whether there should not be a restoration of rank with respect to those who are men of merit. It seems but reasonable there should.

Several new regulations will, I imagine, be found useful in the articles of war; which the Judge Advocate, from his official experience of the deficiency, can more accurately indicate. One thing, we have suffered much from, is the want of a proper gradation of punishments: the interval between a hundred lashes and death is too great and requires to be filled by some intermediate stages. Capital crimes in the army are frequent, particularly in the instance of desertion: actually to inflict capital punishment upon every deserter or other heinous offender, would incur the imputation of cruelty, and by the familiarity of the example, destroy its efficacy; on the other hand to give only a hundred lashes to such criminals is a burlesque on their crimes rather than a serious correction, and affords encouragement to obstinacy and imitation. The Courts are often in a manner compelled by the enormity of the facts, to pass sentences of death, which I am as often obliged to remit, on account of



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the number in the same circumstances, and let the offenders pass wholly unpunished. This would be avoided, if there were other punishments short of the destruction of life, in some degree adequate to the crime; and which might be with propriety substituted.<sup>37</sup> Crimes too are so various in their complexions and degrees, that to preserve the just rule of proportion, there ought to be a gradual scale of punishments; in order to which, whipping should be extended to any number at discretion, or by no means, limited lower than five hundred lashes.

Upon the whole Gentlemen, I doubt not you are fully impressed with the defects of our present military system, and the necessity of speedy and decisive measures, to put it upon a satisfactory footing.<sup>38</sup> The disagreeable picture, I have given you, of the wants and sufferings of the army, and the discontents reigning among the officers, is a just representation of evils, equally melancholy and important; and unless effectual remedies be applied without loss of time, the most alarming and ruinous consequences are to be apprehended. I have the honor, etc.<sup>39</sup>

37. See Council of General Officers, Aug. 14, 1778, *post*.

38. The difficulties of raising men for the army at this time are pictured in Tench Tilghman's letter to Lieut Col. Aaron Burr (January 30). A captain who was advanced \$200 for recruiting bounties found, after enlisting a few men, that he could not compete with the high State bounties. He was allowed, therefore, to "take back the men that he has enlisted and repay the 200 Dollars." Four of these men were in Burr's regiment, so Tilghman requested their delivery to the captain. Tilghman's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

39. The text is from the original report, which seems to have been left with Washington by the committee. It is 38 folio pages in length, in the writing of Alexander Hamilton, signed by Washington, and indorsed by Francis Dana. Prior to the arrival of the committee of Congress at Valley Forge, Washington requested the opinion of the general officers, in writing, upon a "proposed new establishment and regulation of the army." The

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foregoing report is based upon these observations of the general officers, which are in the *Washington Papers* and entered in a group in the Varick Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

On January 29 John Fitzgerald answered a letter of January 28 from Col. Walter Stewart, by direction of Washington, approving an alternation of dragoon picket guards as a means of checking provisions being taken into Philadelphia and directing the seizure of cloth in some fulling mills near Newtown, Pa., which belonged “to rich Quakers, and People of this County, much disaffected, who are by no means in want of Cloathing.” Fitzgerald's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

“This day [January 29] I was on fatigue building a brest work to defend the Middle line of the Camp.”— *Military Journal of George Ewing* (Yonkers: 1928. Privately printed).

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, January 31, 1778.

Sir: I have been honored with your several favors of the 14th, 19th, 22d and 25th Inst. in due order with their Inclosures, which shall have my attention. My application in preparing and digesting matters for the consideration of the Committee who are now in Camp prevented me acknowledging them before. The packet for Governor Livingston which accompanied the first Two, I transmitted him the next day by a careful hand and hope it got safe to him.

The inclosed Copy of a Letter and memorial from General Foreman I would take the liberty of laying before Congress. Supplying the Army with Salt is a matter of infinite importance, and if it can be accomplished, it is very much to be desired. How far General Foreman may succeed in his Experiments I cannot determine; But, from every account there is a favourable prospect of his manufacturing a considerable quantity of this necessary essential article. For the greater security of the works against the Enemy's Tenders &c. he

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prays to be furnished with a guard of Fifty Men. His requisition is submitted to Congress, and they will be pleased to determine upon it, in such manner as they may think proper. I have the honor, etc.<sup>52</sup>

52. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Valley Forge, February 3, 1778.

Sir: On the Ulto., I had the honor to receive your favor of the 27th with the Copies alluded to. As the proceedings of Congress in this instance, seem to imply, that our Unfortunate people in the hands of the Enemy are to be victualled by us, I have only to wish that the Supplies may be constant and plentiful. I have transmitted your letter to Mr. Boudinot who is out of Camp, and have requested his most pointed attention to the business. I have also written to Genl. Howe upon the occasion and inclosed him One of the Copies. In my next, I shall take the liberty of transmitting you a Copy of my Letter to him on this head, and of some Others which have lately passed between us. I have the honor, etc.

P.S. I wish a Supply of Money to be sent, as soon as possible. Our distresses for want of it, are not easily to be described. What Mr. Palfrey brought with him was not sufficient to pay the Troops *for November* by 250 or 300,000 *Dollars*. The demands were immense, most of the Eastern Troops having had four or five Month's pay due them and some more. The Army now in general has *three months pay in arrear*, exclusive of the Month's Extra pay, and

besides this, the Quarter Master is pressing for large drafts for the purposes of his Department, tho' he received a proportion of the Money which came with Mr. Palfrey.<sup>66</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

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Valley Forge, February 8–14, 1778.

Sir: I have been duly honored with your Favor of the 3d Instant and with its Inclosure.

As General McDougall's late severe illness and present feeble state, will not permit him to proceed on the intended incursion into Canada, Baron de Kalb will follow the Marquis agreeable to his wish and the direction of Congress.

According to the promise contained in my last, I take the liberty of transmitting you Copies of such Letters, as have lately passed between Genl. Howe and myself.

February 12.

Since writing the above, I have received another Letter from General Howe of the 5th. Instant, Copy of which and of my Answer you have also inclosed.<sup>78</sup> By these you will perceive, that he has proposed a General exchange of prisoners and that I have acceded to it. I have written to Mr. Boudinot, Commissary in this line, requiring

66. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. Indorsed as read in Congress February 5, and referred to the Board of Treasury.

78. According to Charles Thomson's indorsement, these inclosures were: Sir William Howe's letters to Washington, Jan. 8, 18, 19, and Feb. 5, 1778; Washington's letters to Howe, Jan. 8, 20, 30, and Feb. 10, 1778. All of these letters, except that from Howe to Washington, January 8, are in the *Washington papers*.

his return to Camp, and shall give him directions to pursue the most speedy measures for accomplishing this business, so interesting to the unhappy Officers and Men in General Howe's hands, and to the cause of Humanity. There are some other matters, as you will discover, which I could not enter upon.

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The situation of the Affairs of the Army has not till lately made it convenient to go into the inquiry, directed by the Resolve of the 28th of November of the losses of the Forts Montgomery and Clinton, in the state of New York and of Fort Mifflin in the Delaware. With respect to the two former, it happens, that almost all the principal Officers acting in that quarter, were in some way or other so far concerned in the affair, as to make them improper for prosecuting the inquiry. I therefore propose to send Officers from this Army: If his health will permit, I should wish General McDougall to preside. His thorough knowledge of those posts and all their connexions, qualifies him in a peculiar manner for the purpose. I have written to him on the subject.

With respect to Fort Mifflin, the inquiry involves very extensive considerations, and more or less affects almost all the General Officers in this Army, whose advice and concurrence in the measures taken, make them in some degree parties. The mode in my opinion, most unexceptionable to be pursued is for Congress, to authorise a Committee of their own body, or to delegate any other persons they may chuse to intrust, not connected with the operations of this Army, to go into the business.

February 14.

Your Several favors of the 7th and that of the 8th Inst. were duly received yesterday evening.

As soon as circumstances will admit, I shall appoint a Court Martial in the case directed, and shall notify the parties concerned of the same.

The Oath which Congress have prescribed to be taken by the Officers of the Army, I shall publish in General Orders and the mode how it is to be done with directions about the certificates.

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I shall extend Lt Colo. Dyer's<sup>79</sup> Furlough to the first of April as required. I have the honor, etc.<sup>80</sup>

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 10, 1778.

Sir: I have been favored with yours of the 27th and 31st. Ultimo. The Officers and Men, belonging to the Artillery under the command of Major Stevens,<sup>91</sup> had been sent back, previous to the Receipt of yours of the 27th. I have always found great inconvenience in keeping small parties detached from their Corps.

You must have heard that the Officers who had the

<sup>79</sup>. Lieut. Col. Thomas Dyer, of the Eighth Connecticut Regiment. He resigned Apr. 11, 1778.

<sup>80</sup>. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

<sup>91</sup>. Maj. Ebenezer Stevens, of the Independent Battalion of Artillery. His battalion was annexed to the Third Continental Artillery in the fall of 1778. He was lieutenant colonel of the Second Continental Artillery from November, 1778; served to June, 1783.

British Cloathing in charge, would not proceed further than Lancaster. They insisted upon and have returned to Philadelphia.

I cannot find, upon inquiry of Colo. Smith,<sup>92</sup> that there was any thing reprehensible upon the part of the Officers, he says on the contrary, that their behaviour was in his opinion strictly proper while under his Care. Lieut. Patterson<sup>93</sup> one of the Officers who attended them, also says, that their behaviour upon the journey was conformable to the terms of their parole.

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I received a Letter from you of the 23d January on the subject of Cloathing said to be collected in this State for the use of the Pennsylvania Troops, and delivered out to the Army in *general*. There was a mistake in the representation of this matter to you. Soon after the Officers were sent out by me to collect cloathing they were recalled, by desire of the President, who informed me by a deputation from the Assembly, that they had appointed Commissioners for that purpose. What little was collected by the Officers, was distributed among the Men of their own Regiments. I do not believe that the Cloathier General ever received any of it on the general account. On the contrary, he complains that the State had taken a parcel of Cloth to their particular use, which he had purchased for the Continent. I am &c.<sup>94</sup>

92. Lieut. Col. William Stephens Smith, of Lee's Additional Continental regiment.

93. Lieut. William Patterson(?), of Grayson's Additional Continental regiment.

94. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. It is addressed to General Gates as president of the Board of War.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, February 19, 1778.

Sir: I am to acknowledge the honor of your Letter of the 13th Instant with its inclosures.<sup>50</sup>

The recommendation and authority to the several States, in the instances pointed out by the Resolve, if they are duly attended to, will produce many valuable consequences. The abuses complained of are but too prevalent and require a reform. I have the honor etc.<sup>51</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Valley Forge, February 21, 1778.

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Sir: At General Knox's departure from camp, I directed him to forward the artillery at Albany, to some proper depository in this quarter, convenient for rendering them useful in the next campaign. My motives for this, were, that in case of an augmentation of this army, we should stand in need of a much larger train, than we now have in the field; and ought, besides, to have a

50. The resolve of Congress alluded to was one of February 9 requesting the Sates to give attention to the conduct of all Continental officers within their borders, both civil and military; to suspend them for misconduct or neglect of duty and to make temporary appointments in their places where necessary.

51. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

reserve to answer the demands of contingencies.

In consideration of the difficulty of transportation at this Season, it was thought advisable to postpone the removal of the Cannon from Albany, till early in the Spring, when the Situation of the North River would permit their being brought a great part of the distance by water, which would be the most expeditious and least expensive Way. In the mean time, the Navigation to Albany being impracticable, it was imagined they would be intirely safe in remaining there, and that it would be inexpedient to remove them into New England, which, if they were to come to this army, must occasion a good deal of unnecessary expence, trouble and delay.

By a letter I have just received from General Knox, I learn, that five and twenty field pieces and two howitzers, had arrived at Farmington in Connecticut sent there by your order. I must beg the favor of the board to inform me, whether they may have any particular reasons, or views with regard to the disposal of that artillery, or what may remain in Albany, unemployed in the Northern expedition, which may not coincide with my first intention. If not, I should wish to give immediate directions to have the artillery at



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Farmington forwarded on its route to this state; in doing which, no time is to be lost, as I am informed the roads from Connecticut to Hudson's River across the mountains, will become impassible, when the spring fairly opens. I have &ca.58

58. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton and is indorsed as to "Genl. Horatio Gates, President of the Board." The letter sent is in the writing of Richard Kidder Meade and is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 23, 1778.

Sir: I am honored with your two favours of the 14th and 18th Instant with their inclosures.

With respect to the subject of the former, to obtain redress in the case of Mr. Heister,<sup>90</sup> the mode suggested in the postscript, appears to me the most eligible and I shall take the first opportunity to transmit a copy of your letter to Genl Heath, with the directions required.

I shall take the measures, necessary on my part, to comply with the views of Congress in the regulations which have been made in the Ordnance department; and should be happy did any additional ones occur to me, that might conduce to the advancement of the department, to submit them to the board, but at present, there do not.

Some time since, General Knox shewed me an estimate of ordnance and stores, for the use of the ensuing campaign, which he intended to lay before the board. I should be glad to be informed what prospects there are of procuring the requisite supplies. I am extremely apprehensive that we shall suffer much, and have the operations of the campaign greatly retarded and enfeebled from a deficiency in some essential articles, unless the most strenuous exertions are employed, to make the ample provision of which we shall stand in need.

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90. Daniel Heister, jr., of Pennsylvania, who had been seized by the British. (See Washington's letter to Major General Heath, Mar. 14, 1778, *post.*)

The board, I doubt not, will feel the importance of doing every thing in their power to prevent a deficiency of this kind; and will bestow their utmost attention and zeal, upon a matter of such interesting consequence. I have the honor, etc.<sup>91</sup>

P.S. 26th. Inclosed is a piece of intelligence I have just received, to which I beg the attention of the board, and that they will take proper measures to apprehend Robinson.<sup>92</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 27, 1778.

Sir: I am now to acknowledge the Honor of your several Favors of the 18th, 19th and 21st Instant which with their respective Inclosures have been duly received.

In compliance with the Resolution of Congress of the 5th Inst. transmitted in your Letter of the 7th. I was about to take measures for appointing a Court Martial and bringing on the Trials, which they direct. But on recurring to the papers, you were pleased to send me, I do not find that the Committee have made any particular charges against the Officers who are to be the objects of trial.<sup>15</sup> It was probably the intention of Congress, that these charges

<sup>91</sup>. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

<sup>92</sup>. John Robinson, of Shermans Valley, Pa. He was reported to be collecting a force of loyalists to seize all civil officers he could and to join the British in Philadelphia. The intelligence came from Miss Anne Myers, of Philadelphia, through Maj. John Jameson.

15. "Resolved, That the committee be directed to transmit the evidence by them collected to General Washington, and that he be authorized and directed to appoint a court martial for the trial of the general officers who were in the northern department when Ticonderoga

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and Mount Independence were evacuated, agreeable to the rules and articles of war: That two counsellors, learned in the law, be appointed to assist and cooperate with the judge advocate in conducting the trial. The gentlemen chosen: Jonathan D. Sergeant, Esq., attorney general for the State of Pennsylvania; William Patterson, Esq. attorney general for the State of New Jersey.” (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Feb. 10, 1778.)

should be laid by me, but as I might err in doing it, and not fully correspond with their views in the matter, especially as it would require considerable time and thought, to make myself sufficiently acquainted with It, from the papers collected, I should think it would be most advisable, for Congress to state explicitly the charges they wish to have exhibited against the Officers respectively; and then the business may be proceeded on with propriety.

Besides the above reasons, which operate generally against my exhibiting the charges, in the particular instance of General Schuyler, it is impossible for me to do it, as I do not know what instructions he had received from Congress from time to time as to the objects of his command, nor precisely what these were. These appear to me necessary to be known, and essential to carrying on a prosecution against him. When Congress shall have arranged the points and are pleased to honor me with them, I will pursue the speediest measures to bring on the Trials.<sup>16</sup> The sooner this can be done the better, as some of the parties are extremely anxious and strongly importune it.

Baron Steuben has arrived at Camp. He appears to be much of a Gentleman, and as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, a man of Military knowledge and acquainted with the World.

The inclosed Extract of a Letter from General Putnam<sup>17</sup> will shew how great the distresses in that Quarter for want of Money. He has described their necessities so fully, that it is unnecessary for

16. On March 6 it was ordered that so much of Washington's letter of February 27 as relates to the court-martial on the officers in the Northern Department be referred to a

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committee of four. The members chosen were William Ellery, James Smith, Eliphalet Dyer, and James Lovell.

17. Putnam's letter, dated Feb. 13, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*. The extract noted is filed with this letter from Washington in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

me to add upon the subject. I shall only observe, that his account is more than justified by many other Letters, and that I am persuaded, the earliest possible supply will be forwarded, that the very important and interesting works carrying on there may not be the least retarded.

I am under some embarrassments respecting the 13th Virginia Regiment. It was raised on the West side of the Alleghany and towards Pittsburg with Assurances from the Officers, it is said, that the men would not be drawn from that Quarter. This circumstance, added to the disturbances by the Indians and the exposed situation of their families, has been the cause of great desertions and is at present the source of much uneasiness; and the more so as part of the Regiment was never marched from thence. I think the whole should be united, either here or there, and wish Congress to direct me upon the subject. At the same time that their case, if truly represented, seems to be hard and to merit the indulgence they claim, I would observe that the 12th Regiment from the Western parts of the same State and the 8th and 12th Pennsylvania from the Frontier Counties of this, have similar pretensions and might become uneasy and apply for a like indulgence.

Agreeable to the directions of Congress, I shall send a Major General to Rhode Island.<sup>18</sup> Tho' the number of Officers here of this rank, from one cause and another, is greatly reduced and more so than it ought to be in point of policy.

Our loss of Matrosses the last Campaign, in killed

18. Maj. Gen. John Sullivan was sent.

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and wounded, was considerable, and it has been not a little increased this Winter by desertions from Colo. Proctor's Corps. From these circumstances, we are very weak in this line, and I request that Congress will be pleased to order Colo. Harrison's Regiment of Artillery to march from Virginia, as early as the Roads will admit and join this Army. I have the honor, etc.<sup>19</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 27, 1778.

Sir: The frequent complaints of the Brigade Majors and Adjutants, for want of Writing Paper, obliges me to call the attention of the Board to the procurement of that necessary article. Colo. Pickering can inform them how much the service suffers on that account, from his experience while in the office of Adjutant General. I know it properly belongsto the Quarter Master General's department to provide paper, but the Deputy who has attended the Army has not been able to furnish any thing like the proper quantity. I fear

19. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

it is not to be obtained on the Continent, as all the Mills are fully employed in making Cartridges and printing paper; I would therefore wish that orders may be given to the purchasers of Military stores, to buy what writing paper may fall in their way, and that the secret Committee or whatever body has the Management of importations from abroad, may be desired to include paper among other Articles. If they were also desired to import a parcel of blank Books proper for Orders, it would be very convenient. I have the honor, etc.<sup>20</sup>

### **To FRANCIS HOPKINSON AND JOHN WHARTON**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 1, 1778.

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Gentlemen: I am informed that a Number of the continental flat Boats still remain at Bordentown. I wrote to Commodore Hazelwood to have them removed higher up the River, but why he has not done it I do not know. I am very apprehensive that the Enemy will one day or other make an excursion and destroy our Vessels, Boats and Stores at that place. To prevent as much of this as possible, I shall esteem it as a favour if you will, upon your return, have all the flat Boats sent up as far as Trenton, and if Commodore Hazelwood

20. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

has not hands enough with him to carry them up the Falls I will write to Coryell and desire him to employ people to do it. These Boats may probably be of the greatest importance to us in the course of the Campaign; and I therefore beg that your first attention may be paid to them.

As I see no great prospect of the Gallies being of any use to us while the Enemy have their Ships of War at Philadelphia, I submit it to you whether it would not be better to have the Cannon and Stores taken out of them and the Hulks carried up the Creeks and sunk. From repeated misfortunes we have lost the greatest part of our heavy Cannon at our different posts and we ought therefore to be as careful as possible of the remainder. I am informed that the Cannon taken out of the Continental, State and private Vessels yet remain at Bordentown to a very considerable amount. I could therefore wish that means might be fallen upon to remove them from the Water Side, some distance back into the Country from whence they may be brought occasionally. I also think that every kind of public Stores should be removed from thence if possible, for as the Enemy have the Command of the Water they may at any time destroy or carry them off. I make no doubt but the Gentlemen of the State Navy Board will chearfully cooperate with you in what respects their Department.<sup>11</sup> I have the honor etc.

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P.S. If the Commodore carries the Boats no further than Trenton he should give Coryell notice that he may come down for them. It will be worth considering whether the Cannon cannot be carried up the River in the Boats.<sup>12</sup>

11. Hopkinson and Wharton replied the same day that all the boats had been removed up the Delaware “above two months ago” and that they would exert themselves to secure the cannon and stores at Bordentown. There was some friction between the Continental Navy Board and the Pennsylvania State Navy, so Hopkinson and Wharton suggested that Washington write to Commodore Hazelwood direct, as they did not “know how even a Recommendation from us to Commodore Hazelwood would be received.” This letter is in the Washington Papers.

12. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **\*To THE COMMITTEE FROM CONGRESS**

Valley forge, March 6, 1778.

Gentn: However inconvenient, and distressing to the Service in this quarter it may be to part with another Majr. General, yet, in obedience to a resolve of Congress I must do it, if neither Genl. Putnam nor Heath, in the judgment of the Comee. will answer the purposes of the command at Rhode Island.

The Comee. best know the designs of Congress in assembling a body of Troops in that State; consequently, what kind of an Officer (under our present circumstances) may be made to answer. They also know with more certainty than I do, what will be the determination of Congress respecting Genl. Putnam, and of course, whether the appointing of him to such a command as that at Rhode Island would fall within their views; it being incumbant on me to observe, that with such materials as I am furnished, the work must go on, whether well, or ill, is another matter: if therefore he, and others, are not laid aside they must be placed where they can least injure the Service. Generals Arnold and

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Lincoln will not, by Doctr. Browns acct. just from Albany, be able to take the Field till June.  
With great respect I am etc.<sup>48</sup>

48. The original is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 33. The draft in the *Washington Papers*, also in Washington's writing, varies slightly from the letter sent.

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 6, 1778.

Sir: As the season approaches fast when we may expect to draw together a considerable reinforcement to the Army, I cannot help having apprehensions that we shall be at a loss for Arms and Accoutrements for them. The last Returns that I obtained from the Commissaries on this side the North River were very imperfect, as the Stores were then on the remove from Bethlehem and Allen Town to Lebanon and Carlisle; nor have I recd. a regular Return from the Eastward for some time past. I am therefore much at a loss how to form a judgment, with any degree of accuracy, of the number that may be depended upon by the opening of the Campaign. You will oblige me by ordering an abstract to be taken from the latest returns and send to me. The number of Arms in the different Elaboratories wanting repair are very great; but I am fearful that there is neglect in the Armourer's department, owing to the inactivity of the person at the head of that branch, who I am told is almost superannuated.

As the neighbourhood of Philadelphia is the place where the Army will rendezvous in the Spring, I think it will be necessary to draw the Arms from all our remote Magazines to those in our Rear, and I have for this reason desired Genl Knox to send all the new ones (except those wanted for the recruits) from the Eastward to this State, and to have the old repaired with the greatest industry. I do

not know whether we have any public Arms to the Southward, but if we have, I think they ought, for the same reason, to be brought forward in time [even from Charles Town].



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The State of Virginia has voted a very considerable number of Men, who are to serve for Six Months, and it is more than probable, that if other States should find it difficult to procure their Quota of Continental Troops that they may adopt Similar expedients. I take it for granted, that they will all depend upon the public Magazines for Arms, and it will be a mortifying and discouraging circumstance should we not be able to supply them.

I am also apprehensive, that the scarcity of leather will occasion a Scarcity of Accoutrements. From what the Commissary of Hides informed me some time ago, his prospects of dressed leather are distant, he having put out a great quantity to be tanned, which will not be fit for Service until next Fall.

The Cartouch Boxes made in this Country, are generally very bad, and I see little chance of their being made Substantial and fit to turn the weather until we can bring our manufacture of leather to a greater perfection; which is only to be done by letting it lay much longer in the Vats, than we can afford, under our present wants. Military Accoutrements of the leather kind are said to come exceedingly cheap and good from France, and I would therefore Suggest the propriety of ordering a quantity from thence, if it should not have been already done. The Hides of the Cattle killed in the Army might then be in a manner totally applied

to procuring Shoes for them, by making contracts to exchange one for the other. Had not this method been fallen upon, the Soldiers must have been rendered totally unfit for Service, as they could not get Supplied upon any other Terms, but in a very small degree. I have very little doubt, but contracts of this kind may be so extended, as to procure a constant Supply of good Shoes for the whole Army. This is a matter worthy of the attention of the Board, as we have Suffered more for the want of Shoes than for any other Article [and those imported from France affording little more than a days wear.] I have the honor, etc.<sup>54</sup>

## TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

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Valley Forge, March 7, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty of transmitting you Copies of three Letters from Genl. Howe of the 14th and 21st Ultimo, and of the 2d Inst., with their Inclosures.<sup>60</sup> The unhappy Violation of the Flag of Truce has laid us under no small Embarrassments and has afforded the Enemy good Grounds for Complaint and Triumph at the same time. This, however, is the natural Consequence and must ever be the Case, where different Powers counteract each other in Matters of the most delicate Importance. There are some circumstances attending this Affair, which it may

54. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

60. Laurens wrote (March 21) that Washington's letters "of the 7th, 8th and 12th are still in the hands of a Committee from whom may be expected a Special Report respecting the many opprobrious terms and epithets scattered throughout the Papers from Sir William Howe, applied to the good people of these United States and to their Representatives in Congress, which were heard by the House with great Indignation. From expressions of sentiment by Members on all sides, it appears to be the general opinion, that such papers should have been marked with the contempt of an immediate return." This letter is in the President's "Letter Book," *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 13.

possibly be in the Power of Congress to throw Light upon. If they can I shall be obliged by their Assistance.

March 8.

In Consequence of the Letters which have lately passed between Genl. Howe and myself, particularly those of the 5th and 10th Ult., Copies of which I had the Honor to transmit you in mine of the 8th continued to the 14th, I was about to send Commissioners to meet those appointed by Genl. Howe for adjusting the disputed Points between us; carrying into

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Execution an Exchange of Prisoners and improving the old Cartel, as far as it might be practicable, for their better Accomodation in future. This Meeting was to be the 10th Inst.; But yesterday Morning, Dunlaps paper of the 4th being put into my Hands, I found that a Resolution had been made the 26th of Febry., calling for all Accounts against Prisoners in our Hands and declaring that no Exchange should take place till the Ballance due thereon to the United States, is discharged. Some of the States are not required to exhibit their Claims till the 1st of June. The Time that would be taken to adjust them and make a Delivery of the Prisoners would more than exhaust all the ensuing Summer.

This Resolution I cannot consider as an intended Infraction of my Engagements with General Howe, yet its Operation is diametrically opposite, both to the Spirit and Letter of the Propositions made on my Part and acceded to on his. I supposed myself fully authorized, "by the Instructions and Intentions" of Congress to act as I did, and I now conceive, that the public, as

well as my own personal Honor and faith, are pledged for the Performance.

By the Direction of Congress, I, in the first Instance, stipulated with Genl. Howe an Exchange of Prisoners, Officer for Officer of equal Rank. Soldier for Soldier and Citizen for Citizen. This Agreement they have ever approved, and repeatedly declared their Willingness to carry into Execution. Their Resolution of the 24th March last, impowered me, on Condition of General Lee being declared exchangeable; not only "to proceed" to the Exchange of Prisoners, according to the Principles and Regulations of the Cartel before agreed on, but also to enter into such further Principles and Regulations as should appear to me most proper and advantageous. A subsequent Resolution of the 6th of June holds forth the same Language; sanctions my Conduct and Reasonings in the Negotiations about that Time on the Subject, and directs an Adherence to them. No Event has occurred since that Period, by which I could conclude, there was any Alteration in the Views of Congress. So far from it, that all my late Letters, breathing the same Spirit with the former, and pointedly signifying my Wish to bring about a general Exchange, if not with

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an express, at least, met with a tacit Approbation. Genl. Howe at length, by Profession if not in Reality, is willing to perform the Agreement on the Conditions, required by me and confirmed by them.

It may be said, that with whatever powers I was originally vested to negotiate an Exchange, the Resolution of the 19th Decr.

last was an Abridgement of them, so far as to annex a new Condition; the Settlement and Payment of Accounts previous to it's taking place. I had no Conception of this being the Case, in the present Instance. However the Letter may warrant the Construction. Besides, the common Principle of preventing the Inconveniences, necessarily resulting from allowing the Enemy to make their Payments in paper Currency, I had reason to imagine, that General Burgoyne's Army was more particularly the Object of the concluding Clause. This Interpretation I the more readily adopted; for, exclusive of the Affairs of that Army, I verily believed, that from the confused, defective State of our Accounts relating to Prisoners, there would be a considerable Ballance in favor of Mr. Howe. Nor was the Situation of our Accounts the only Reason for this Belief. The Prisoners in our Hands, especially those Westward of the Delaware, as I am informed, have been in a great measure supported by their own Labor and at the Expence of the Enemy, who have had Agents constantly among us. If this is the Case, the Reason of the Resolve not applying, the Effect ought not of Course.

But perhaps it may be thought contrary to our Interest to go into an Exchange, as the Enemy would derive more immediate Advantage from it, than we should. This I shall not deny; but it appeared to me, that on Principles of genuine extensive Policy, independant of the Considerations of Compassion and Justice, we were under an Obligation not to elude it. I have the best Evidence, that an Event of this Kind is the general Wish of the

Country. I know it to be the Wish of the Army, and no one can doubt, that it is the ardent Wish of the unhappy Sufferers themselves. We need only consult the Tide of Humanity

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and the Sympathies natural to those connected by the Cements of Blood, Interest and a common Dread of Evil, to be convinced, that the prevailing Current of Sentiment demands an Exchange. If the Country, the Army, and even the Prisoners themselves, had a precise Idea of our Circumstances, and could be fully sensible of the Disadvantages, that might attend the giving our Enemy a considerable Reinforcement, without having an Equivalent, they might perhaps be willing to make a Sacrifice of their Feelings to the motives of Policy. But they have not this Knowledge, and cannot be intrusted with it, and their Reasonings of Necessity will be governed by what they feel.

Were an Opinion once to be established, and the Enemy and their Emissaries know very well how to inculcate it, if they are furnished with a plausible Pretext, that we designedly avoided an Exchange, it would be a Cause of Dissatisfaction and Disgust to the Country and to the Army; of Resentment and Desperation to our captive Officers and Soldiers. To say nothing of the Importance of not hazarding our national Character, but upon the most solid Grounds, especially in our Embryo-state, from the Influence it may have on our Affairs abroad; it may not be a little dangerous, to beget in the minds of our own Countrymen, a Suspicion that we do not pay the strictest Observance to the Maxims of Honor and good Faith. It is prudent to use the greatest Caution, not to shock the Notions

of general Justice and Humanity, universal among Mankind, as well in a public as a private View: in a Business, on the side of which the Passions are so much concerned as in the Present, Men would be readily disposed to believe the worst and cherish the most unfavourable Conclusions. Were the Letters that have passed between General Howe and myself from first to last and the Proceedings of Congress on the same Subject, to be published with proper Comments, it is much to be feared, if the Exchange should be deferred till the Terms of the last Resolve were fulfilled, that it would be difficult to prevent our being generally accused with a Breach of good Faith. Perhaps it might be said, that while the Enemy refused us Justice, we fondly embraced the Opportunity to be loud, persevering, incessant in our Claims; but the Moment they were willing to render it, we receded from ourselves and started new Difficulties. This I say, might be the Reasoning of

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speculative Minds, and they might consider all our Professions, as mere Professions, or at best, that Interest and Policy were to be the only Arbiters of their Validity.

Imputations of this Nature, would have a tendency to unnerve our Operations, by diminishing that Respect and Confidence, which are essential to be placed in those who are at the Head of Affairs, either in the civil or military Line. This, added to the Prospect of hopeless Captivity would be a great Discouragement to the Service. The ill Consequences of both would be immense, by increasing the Causes of Discontent in the Army, which are already too numerous, and many of which are in a great measure

unavoidable, by fortifying that unwillingness, which already appears too great, towards entering into the Service, and of Course impeding the progress both of drafting and recruiting, by dejecting the Courage of the Soldiery from an Apprehension of the Horrors of Captivity, and finally by reducing those, whose Lot it is to drink the bitter Cup, to a Despair, which can only find Relief by renouncing their Attachments and engaging with their Captors. These Effects have already been experienced in part from the Obstacles that have hitherto lain in the Way of Exchanges; but if these Obstacles were once to seem the Result of System, they would become tenfold. Nothing has operated more disagreeably upon the Minds of the Militia, than the Fear of Captivity on the Footing it has heretofore stood. What would be their Reasonings, if it should be thought to stand upon a worse.

If a present, temporary Interest is to be a ruling Principle, it is easy to prove, that an Exchange can never take place. The Constitution of our Army in respect to the Term of Service, for which our Men engage, and the Dependence, we are obliged to place on the Militia, must forever operate against us in Exchanges, and forbid an Equality of Advantages. Should it be said there are times, when it might be more peculiarly unequal and injurious, and that the present is such, on account of the weak condition of our Army, I answer, that the Delay necessarily involved, in the previous Negotiation on the Subject, in delivering the prisoners from time to time, in small numbers, and receiving others in their Stead, and the Mode of Delivery at different Places, will nearly bring the Matter

to the Point we could wish, and give us Leisure to reinforce this Army, if it is to be done at all, so as to obviate, in a great measure, the ill Consequences apprehended. But if the Argument of Interest, on a partial Scale, be pursued as far as it will go, not only the general Consideration thrown out above, but special ones, opposite to every Situation, will present themselves, that we ought not to exchange. Now we ought not, because our Army is weak. When the Season is more advanced and it is Time for the Campaign to open, we ought not, because our Army may be strong, and it will be our Business to avail ourselves of our own Strength and the Enemy's weakness, to strike some decisive Blow. If they by the Protection of their Shipping and impregnable Works, should be able to baffle our Attempts, 'till the Period of Reinforcements from Europe arrive, it will surely then, not be our Interest to add Numbers and Strength to an Enemy already sufficiently numerous and strong. Thus, by a Parity of Reasoning, the golden æra will never come, which is to relieve the Miseries of Captivity, our Service must become odious, those who are out of it will endeavour to keep so, and those who are in it will wish to get out of it. Every Prisoner the Enemy makes will be his Soldier, rather than submit to a rigorous and despairing Confinement.

If we do not seize the present propitious Moment, when the Necessities of the Enemy, press them to reasonable Terms, to form and establish a liberal Cartel, it is not impossible in the Vicissitudes and Reverses of War, that a Time may come, when we should wish we had embraced it, and Interest may strongly impel the

Enemy to decline it, except on the most unequal Conditions. True policy as well as good Faith, in my Opinion, binds us to improve the Occasion.

There are however some Ambiguities in General Howe's Conduct, which require Explanation and ought to put us upon our Guard. I determined to make the Affair of Citizens; viz. to procure an Exemption from Captivity for them if possible, or if not, since it cannot now be demanded as a Matter of Right, to fix their Exchangeability upon the easiest and most unequivocal Foundation, an indispensable Preliminary to any further

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Procedure, and at the same Time, to secure the Exchange of General Lee and all other Officers who have been the particular Objects of exception.

The Interview intended between General Howe's Commissioners and those on our Part on the 10th Instant is now postponed.<sup>61</sup> I cannot doubt that Congress, in Preservation of the public Faith and my personal Honor, will remove all Impediments that now oppose themselves to my Engagements, and that they will authorize me, through Commissioners appointed for the Purpose, to negotiate a more extensive and competent Cartel, upon such Principles as may appear advantageous and founded in Necessity, any Resolutions heretofore to the contrary notwithstanding; and I must request that they will favor me with their Answer by the earliest Opportunity. The Work from its nature, will be difficult. Two parties are concerned whose Interests are more than opposite in a common View. We shall endeavour to act for the best, and to promote the public Service, as far as possible;

61. Howe wrote (March 24) to Lord George Germain: "The time appointed for the meeting of the commissioners being postponed by General Washington to the 31st of this month, without assigning any satisfactory reason, leads me to believe that neither he, nor those under whose authority he acts, are sincere in their professions to carry an exchange into execution at this time."

though we may not be able to answer the Expectations of all; But it should be remembered, that although General Howe's Want of Men affords a Prospect of favourable Terms; yet he will not be disposed to sacrifice to it, all Considerations of general Advantage, in a Contract of such a Nature; and it is not even to be hoped, that it can take place, except on Principles of mutual Benefit.

I persuade myself, that the Freedom I have taken in delivering my Sentiments so fully upon this Occasion, will readily be excused; as it proceeded from a Desire to place the Motives of my Conduct in a just point of View, and from an Opinion of Duty that led me to a



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free Discussion of a Subject, which, considered in all its Lights, will appear to comprehend Consequences of the first Delicacy and Magnitude. I have the honor etc.62

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 9, 1778.

Sir: I have been this day favd. with yours of the 27th February and of the 2d, 3d and 4th instants, which I shall answer in their order. The removal of so valuable a train of Field Artillery from Albany to Farmington as to a place of greater security was certainly

62. The letter was read in Congress on March 16 and referred to a committee of three: Francis Lightfoot Lee, John Henry, and Samuel Huntington. On March 18 Congress resolved "that General Washington be authorized and empowered to proceed to the exchange of such prisoners as are now in the power of the enemy, without waiting for the settlement of the accounts aforesaid."

a measure highly proper, and you may be assured, that every precaution shall be taken to escort it safely thro' Jersey to this Camp, when it is thought advisable to bring them hither. You mistook the intent of mine of the 18th February. I did not mean to give you the trouble of making a Return of the British Officers who were exchanged after the Convention. Genl. Reidesel, as I informed you, wrote to me to obtain liberty for him to make an exchange of some of his Suite and other foreign Officers, as that liberty had been allowed to the British. I did not choose to give him any answer, untill I had applied to you, that I might know, whether you had any reason for making such distinction; and as you misapprehended me, I shall still be obliged to defer answering him till I hear from you. I think, considering the great number of Officers of ours who are in captivity, it is our interest to exchange as many of our officers, prisoners under the Convention as we can.

Commissioners from me are to meet others from Genl. Howe on the 31st of this month to endeavour to settle a general exchange of prisoners: untill we know the issue of the

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negociation, it will be hardly worth while to alter the [present] Situation of the prisoners in Lancaster County.

On the 27th February I had occasion to write to Congress on the subject of yours of the 3d. It was occasioned by a representation from the Colonel of the 13th Virginia Regiment which was raised as Colo. McKays and Cooks were, to remain upon the Frontier. Was this the case with only one Regiment, I should not hesitate, considering the face of Affairs to the Westward, to order it immediately to Fort Pitt

or the neighbourhood. But the 8th and 12th Pennsylvania and 12th and 13th Virginia all claim the same right, and if the indulgence is granted to one, the others will be dissatisfied. And to spare them all at this time is impossible. To regain the deserters from those Regiments is certainly a very desirable thing, and the mode you point out is the most probable. But I fear if those Men who are now here, find that the deserters are not to be brought down to join their Regiments in Camp that they may be induced to go off in hopes of obtaining the same terms. I confess I am much embarrassed by this matter, and shall be exceedingly glad to have the advice and assistance of Congress and the Board upon the subject before I come to any determination. It is an evil that will ever result from inlistments for local purposes, when it is not convenient to abide by the agreement.

I shall immediately transmit the papers, inclosed in yours of the 4th to General Howe. I have the honor etc.

P.S. Several instances having occurred in which Officers have drawn cloathing from the Cloathier General, not being entitled to it, I shall be glad if any applications are made to the Board that they will never give orders to any but such as bring testimonials from the Brigadier or Officer commanding the Brigade they belong to. Some who have resigned have taken up Cloathing on their return home.<sup>72</sup>

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72. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. The word in brackets, also by Tilghman, is in the draft, which is addressed to General Gates. The letter sent is unaddressed.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, March 12, 1778.

Sir: On Sunday night I had the honor to receive your favors of the 1st<sup>11</sup> and 5th Instant with their Inclosures.

I am happy to find that my past conduct, respecting Citizens, in the correspondence between Genl Howe and myself is approved by Congress. They may rest assured that their rights are strongly impressed on my mind, and that in all my transactions every support in my power shall be given them. I know their importance, and in my expected negotiations with Genl. Howe, if possible, I will exempt Citizens from Captivity. However I cannot hope to effect it, as I cannot demand it as a matter of right, since Congress themselves in their Original resolve, directing a proposition to be made for the exchange of Prisoners, mentioned that of Citizens, which implied a right of capturing them. They may also be assured, that General Lee will not be forgotten. He has all along been a principle object in dispute, and so far from doing any thing injurious to him, his right to be exchanged and releasement are intended to be placed upon the most explicit, unambiguous footing. Indeed from the spirit of Genl. Howe's Letters, collectively taken, since his agreement to enlarge the Officers on parole, in the first instance, and his extension of it in the last to an exchange, (tho' they are not free from ambiguities) it may be inferred, that on sending in Lt. Colo. Campbell and the Hessian Field Officers captured 11. Laurens's letter of March 1 inclosed, among other resolves, that of February 27.

at Trenton, that an exchange of all Officers will immediately commence. It seems to be a point with him, that it shall begin with them, as they have been longest in captivity.

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I have taken the liberty to inclose you Copies of three Letters which have just passed between Genl. Howe and myself more particularly concerning Genl Lee; in which I have pushed matters respecting him, as far as I thought it *prudent at this time*. Every precaution will certainly be used to prevent the Enemy gaining any advantage in the exchange of prisoners.

With great deference, I would take the liberty to observe that Congress seem to have carried the preamble of their Resolve of the 26th Ult. prohibiting the inlisting &c. Prisoners and deserters [to serve in our Army] too far, and thro' accident, to have recited a fact that has never happened (at least to my knowledge) and which is injurious to us. Viz. that *Prisoners* had been inlisted by us. If any have, it is what I never knew. However, be this as it may, if the Resolution has not been published, I could wish the preamble to be altered and only recite "that experience &c. in Deserters" only. [has proved that no Confidence &c. can be placed in deserters."] The Resolution itself may stand as it does, comprehending a prohibition against the inlistment of both. My reason for troubling Congress upon this occasion is, we have always complained against Genl Howe and still do for obliging or permitting the prisoners in his hands to inlist, as an unwarrantable procedure and wholly repugnant to the spirit, at least, of the Cartel. This preamble seems to admit the practice on our part, which certainly

would justify it in him, and is such evidence as must silence us in future should it stand, and afford him an opportunity for recrimination, tho' as I have suggested, I believe no *prisoners* have ever been inlisted by us. I am sure none have through compulsion.<sup>12</sup>

I have the pleasure to transmit you an Extract of a Letter from Capt. Barry, which will inform you of his successes. The two ships he burnt, after stripping them; and he was obliged, it seems, two days after the capture, to ground and abandon the Schooner after a long and severe engagement with some of the Enemy's Frigates and smaller armed Vessels. It is said he saved her Guns and most of her tackle.

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I also take the liberty to lay before Congress copies of Letters from Messrs. Champion, Wadsworth and Reed.<sup>13</sup> From the uniformity of sentiment held forth by these Gentlemen, it is much to be feared, the measures lately adopted by the Commissioners at New Haven<sup>14</sup> for regulating the prices of provision will have a disagreeable effect upon our supplies of meat. How far it may be practicable to suspend their operation for a time, I cannot determine; but if it can be done, it appears we should experience many advantages from it. It is a matter of great importance, and as such is submitted to Congress for their consideration. If any thing can be done to procure supplies of provision, particularly of the salt kind, I should suppose and am persuaded it will not be omitted. I have the honor etc.<sup>15</sup>

12. As they stand on the *Journals of the Continental Congress* (February 26) the preamble and resolve recite that: "Whereas experience hath proved that no confidence can be placed in prisoners of war or deserters from the enemy, who inlist into the continental army; but many losses and great mischiefs have frequently happened by them; therefore, Resolved, that no prisoners of war or deserters from the enemy be inlisted, drafted, or returned, to serve in the continental army."

13. These extracts from letters of Henry Champion, commissary of purchases in the Eastern Department; Jeremiah Wadsworth and James Reed, Deputy Commissaries General of Purchases, are filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

14. The Commissioners at New Haven had been appointed by New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania in response to the resolve of Congress of Nov. 22, 1777, for the purpose of regulating the prices of labor, manufactures, internal produce, commodities, etc. They met Jan. 15, 1778, and adjourned January 31. A copy of their proceedings is in the Library of Congress.

15. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets are in the draft but were omitted in the letter sent.

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 14, 1778.

Sir: This will be presented to you by Count Pulaski, who from a conviction that his remaining at the head of the Cavalry, was a constant subject of uneasiness to the principal Officers of that Corps, has been induced to resign his command. Waving a minute inquiry into the causes of dissatisfaction, which may be reduced perhaps to the disadvantages under which he laboured as a Stranger not well acquainted with the Language, Genius and Manners of this Country; It may be sufficient to observe, that the degree of harmony, which is inseperable from the well being and consequent utility of a Corps, has not subsisted in the Cavalry, since his appointment, and that the most effectual as well as the easiest remedy is that which he has generously applied.

The Count however far from being disgusted with the service is led by his thirst of Glory and zeal for the cause of Liberty, to solicit farther employment, and waits upon Congress to make his proposals; they are briefly, that he be allowed to raise an independent Corps composed of 68 Horse and 200 foot, the Horse to be armed with lances and the foot equipped in the manner of light Infantry; The former he thinks he can readily fill with natives of good character and worthy the trust reposed in them; with respect to the latter he is desirous of more latitude, so as to have liberty of

engaging Prisoners and deserters from the Enemy. The original plan for the Lance-men was, to have draughted them from the Regiments of Horse; but as this method would produce a clashing of interests, and perhaps occasion new disturbances, the Count prefers having a Corps totally unconnected with any other; my advice to him therefore, is to inlist his number of Cavalry with the Continental bounty, and if it should be found

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consonant to the views of Congress, to allow his raising the number proposed, over and above the establishment for the Horse, then he would have them on the footing of an independent Corps; if not, he might, at all events have them as Draughts, as in this case there would be no grounds for complaint. With regard to the infantry, which the Count esteems essential to the Success of the cavalry, I have informed him, that the inlisting deserters and prisoners, is expressly prohibited by a late Resolve of Congress. how far Congress might be inclined to make an exception and license the engaging Prisoners, in a particular detached Corps, in which such characters may be admitted with less danger than promiscuously in the line, I could not undertake to pronounce.

I have only to add, that the Counts Valour and active zeal on all occasions have done him great honor, and from a persuasion, that by being less exposed to the inconveniences which he has hitherto experienced, he will render great Services with such a Command as he asks for, I wish him to succeed in his application. It is to be understood that the Count expects to retain his rank as Brigadier and I think is intitled to it, from his general Character and peculiar

distinterestedness on the present occasion.<sup>26</sup> I have the honor, etc.<sup>27</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 16, 1778.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit you a Letter from Governor Clinton,<sup>41</sup> which he inclosed to me open for my perusal and consideration.

The inconvenience, he mentions, as resulting from the resolve respecting the appointment of a commandant for forts Montgomery and Clinton, requires to be obviated. I do not conceive it to have been the design of Congress, to make the command of those forts, altogether distinct, and independent on [of?] the general command of the posts in that quarter; but only to designate the rank of the Officers who should have the immediate

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charge of them. There is such an intimate connexion, between the forts and the other posts and passes in the Highlands and their vicinity, that it is necessary for one Officer to have the superintendency and controul of the whole, and to be answerable for all. If this were not to be the case, but the command were to be divided, there might want that co-operation between the Garrisons and the troops without, which might be essential to their preservation, and to the common purpose of defence.

26. On March 28 Congress authorized Pulaski to raise his corps, the manner of this and the organization being left to Washington. The corps became known as "Pulaski's Legion." After Pulaski's death, at the siege of Savannah in 1779, Colonel Armand took command and the corps was known from then on as "Armand's Legion."

27. In the writing of John Laurens.

41. A copy of this letter from Governor Clinton to Governor Trumbull, dated Mar. 6, 1778, is filed with this letter of Washington to Congress, Mar. 16, 1778.

The assigning a fixed number of Men to the garrisons would not remove this inconvenience; for the co-operation would still be necessary; but if it were otherwise, I should not think the measure advisable; because we do not know what number of men, we may have in the field next campaign, and the number for the defence of the Highlands must be proportioned to the general strength and the force of the garrisons, to that number.

On these considerations, having ordered General McDougall to repair to the Highlands to assume the chief command there. I have comprehended the forts, among the other objects of his trust; in the discharge of which, I am persuaded he will manifest adequate zeal and ability. But as the Resolve, in question,<sup>42</sup> affords room for doubt, it will be proper to have it explained, so as more explicitly to ascertain the intention of Congress.



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I am perfectly in sentiment with Governor Clinton, on the propriety of drawing the troops from the Northward, to reinforce, and carry on the works in the highlands. From every thing I can learn, there seems to be no prospect of prosecuting the intended expedition into Canada. If so, I apprehend it can answer no valuable end to keep a body of troops in and about Albany: In the present circumstances of Canada, little is to be dreaded [from] thence; the enemy in all probability will be well satisfied to act on the defensive, without risking the consequences of an attempt against us. A proper garrison at Fort Schuyler, and a small party, by way of guard at Albany, with the militia of the country that may be occasionally drawn together, will be a sufficient security against the inroads of the enemy from Canada, or the

42. The resolve of Feb. 18, 1778, which authorized Governor Clinton to superintend the fortification and securing the passes of the Highlands; but his duties as Governor of New York prevented him from doing so. Brig. Gen. Samuel Holden Parsons commanded in the Highlands after Putnam went home and until McDougall arrived. For an account of conditions at West Point see George Clinton's letter to Washington, Dec. 20, 1777, and General Parsons's letter to Washington, Mar. 7, 1778. These letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

depredations of the neighbouring indians, supposing there were any of the tribes, whose dispositions were still actively hostile, notwithstanding our late Northern successes; which, is by no means, a natural supposition. All the men more than are wanted for these purposes, would be of the most important utility in the Highlands.

If the arms and stores at Albany should be thought an objection to the plan; I beg leave to observe that Albany appears to me a most improper place for stationary arsenals or magazines, and that those which are there at present should be removed without delay. Besides, as they would be in most danger from an incursion up the North River; the best way to counteract that danger is to strengthen the passes in the Highlands and obstruct

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the navigation; in order to which, the reinforcing them with the troops from the Northward would be no inconsiderable step.<sup>43</sup> With the greatest respect, I have the honor etc.<sup>44</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Valley Forge, March 16, 1778.

Sir: This will be delivered you by Capt. Sullivan, who waits on Congress upon the subject of pay and the loss of his rank

43. See resolve of Mar. 21, 1778, in *Journals of the Continental Congress*.

44. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The words bracketed are supplied as the obvious intent.

in the line of the Massachusetts Officers. He is one of the Gentlemen, who in going with Major Sherburne to relieve the post we had at the Cedars in 1776, after a brave and gallant conduct, fell into the Enemy's hands. In a few days after on the treaty which General Arnold made he generously offered himself, as I have been informed, and went as one of the Hostages to Quebec for the performance of it.

By some means the State of Massachusetts bay, has not continued him in their line, nor has he any appointment in the Army. He is now on parole, thro' the indulgence of Genl Carleton, and has applied to me for pay and rations from the time of his return; and considering also the deprivation of his rank, as hard and injurious, he hopes that he will be provided for in a suitable manner, and according to that standing which he formerly held in the Army.

Captain Sullivan's wishes in either instance, cannot be answered by me. As to the first, the Resolution of the 19th of January regulating the pay of prisoners, which is the only rule for my government, seems to have drawn the line between Officers on parole, who are continued in service, and those who are not; and making that the only criterion to fix

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pay, to have precluded every other discrimination. And the powers which were vested in the respective States to appoint [their own] Officers, prohibit any interference by me in his favor, as to the latter.

[Thus] I have stated the nature of the Captain's claims and the reasons, which are opposed to his obtaining

relief in either instance from me. I shall only add, that the neglect by the States, in their appointments, of the Officers who were in captivity, where there was no other objection to them [and who were liable to no other imputation] was at least ungenerous, if not impolitic and unjust. It has been the case in many instances, and as to the Gentleman, who is particularly the subject of this Letter, the testimonials that have been given of his character, as an Officer, were much in his favor, and greatly to his Honor. By accident the Resolution of the 19th of Janry. alluded to above, has been mislaid. I must trouble you with a request for another copy of it. I transmit Congress Colo. Chs. Webbs application to resign. As Genl Huntington in whose Brigade he is, and in whom I have the utmost confidence is perfectly willing, I have only to say upon the occasion, that I have not the smallest objection to the measure.

General Sullivan set out for Rhode Island on Friday last to take the Command there, in consequence of the Resolution of Congress, directing me to send a Major Genl. there for that purpose.<sup>45</sup> Supposing Genl. Greene in the Quarter Master line, I have now only one Major General left in Camp. I have the honor, etc.<sup>46</sup>

45. The resolve of Feb. 21, 1778. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

46. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The words in brackets are in the draft, but were not in the letter sent.

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

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Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 17, 1778.

Sir: On Saturday I had the Honor to receive your favor of the 10th with the Resolutions alluded to.

Inclosed I take the liberty to transmit an Extract of a Letter just received from Genl. Parsons. This as well as the letter which I inclosed you yesterday from Governor Clinton, will shew the confusion in the management of affairs on the North River. I informed Congress then, that I had sent General McDougall to take the Chief command there, comprehending the Forts, which appeared to me the only effectual means for curing all disorders and promoting the Public Service. To remove all impediments, it were to be wished, that Congress would invest him with every necessary power for carrying into execution the objects of his command; and it might be well, if they were to extend to any future commanding Officer, as it would prevent those difficulties, which have heretofore arisen from their having been considered as merely personal.

I am more and more in sentiment with Governor Clinton, on the propriety and absolute necessity of drawing the Troops from the Northward to reinforce and carry on the Works in the Highlands. From the information I have from Colo. Radiere, who has just come from thence, I find that the intended defences are far less advanced than I had any idea of. According to him little or nothing

is yet done, tho' I have repeatedly and constantly urged the prosecution of them with all possible industry. The inclosed Copies of my Letters to Genl. Putnam will shew, that I have uniformly pressed the closest attention to the business; tho' it might be inferred from Genl Parson's Letter, that there had been some inconsistency in my orders. There remains but a little time to do a great deal in, and I fear that no exertions now will be sufficient to place things in that Quarter, on the secure and respectable footing we could wish. However we should do the most we can, and if the Works cannot be as compleat as they ought, the

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Troops will be there, and a reliance must be had in their bravery to repel any attempt that may be formed against them. I have &ca.58

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, March 18, 1778.

Sir: I have the honor of transmitting you the inclosed letter from General Smallwood, giving intelligence of the Enemy's motions on the Delaware, and his conjectures respecting their object; the account he has heard of troops being on board the Vessels, is confirmed by the relations of deserters [and others,] who agree that

58. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

a considerable number of men have been embarked, and add that they took seventeen days provision with them; from this circumstance it is scarcely to be imagined that they are ordered on a Sea Voyage. The proportion of small Vessels in the Fleet makes it probable that they have in view to collect forage<sup>65</sup> or attempt the destruction of the Salt-Works, and both these ideas are favoured by accounts from the City. As soon as their intentions are certainly known, they shall be communicated; in the mean time, I have the honor, etc.<sup>66</sup>

### **To THE COMMITTEE FROM CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, March 19, 1778.

Gentlemen: Agreeable to General Reed's<sup>73</sup> request I inclose you a list of the Field Officers in the Pennsylvania line.

The Board of General Officers, upon reconsidering Colo. Putnam's<sup>74</sup> claim of rank in the Massachusetts line, and having before them his pretensions in consequence of his appointment as Engineer, have determined to place him in the arrangement next to Colonel Wigglesworth. I am, etc.<sup>75</sup>

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65. At this point in the draft Washington inserted "Forage is their object or" some attempt is to be made for the destruction, etc. Laurens changed the construction as above in the letter he copied for Washington's signature.

66. In the writing of John Laurens. The words in brackets were inserted by Washington.

73. Joseph Reed. He had been appointed a brigadier general in the Continental Army, but had declined.

74. Col. Rufus Putnam, of the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment.

75. The draft is in the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 20, 1778.

Sir: I am honored with yours of the 7th, 11th and 14th Instant. As soon as Genl. Greene enters upon the Office of Quarter Master General he will attend to the Stores at Reading and have all that are not immediately or soon wanted for the Army, removed to a place of greater safety. I am obliged for your attention to the Article of paper, with which I hope we shall be in future better supplied. I do not think much Credit is to be given to the intelligence communicated in yours of the 14th<sup>76</sup>; because the number of Horse mentioned, is more than the Enemy have at present, and if they had them, they would not risque them so great a distance. They cannot possibly march any body of Horse or Foot from Philadelphia, upon the route mentioned in the information, without being discovered by our patrols; But that we may be prepared should such a scheme be in agitation, I have strengthened our advanced picket with 200 Men.

A few days ago, one of our scouting Parties fell in with and took four fine teams going into Philadelphia, two of them belonged to one Evan Griffith, who lived about one Mile from

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York Town. The other two, belonged to one Dorsey who was killed in the skirmish. Griffith made his escape and went into Philadelphia. Inclosed you have the examination of two of the Waggoners who were taken. By enquiring who are Griffith's acquaintances some further discoveries

76. This letter from the Board of War is not found among the *Washington Papers*.

may be made. From what we have found out, in several late instances, the Enemy are attempting by all ways and means to procure a recruit of Horses. I am obliged, by the full information of the State of our Arms, Artillery, Ammunition and other Stores, given in yours of the 14th. If there are not Bayonets and Cartouch Boxes to the Muskets returned serviceable, there will be found a great deficiency of the first, and almost a total want of the latter, as appears from the return transmitted. You must be sensible, that not a moments time is to be lost in providing these necessary Articles and I therefore take it for granted that no exertions on your part will be wanting to procure them. I am endeavouring to have the deficient Bayonets for the Army made up by Armourers drawn from the line.

I perfectly agree with you, as to the necessity of collecting a battering train of Artillery, and I think Springfield and Carlisle the places mentioned by you, very proper to deposit them. Springfield is also the proper place to deposit the spare Stores to the Eastward; but as it appears, that all the Arms and Tents from all the Magazines will be wanted by the Army, they should, without loss of time, be moving towards Carlisle. Nine or ten of the 9 Inch Mortars should also be brought forward. The Field Artillery, heavy twelves and the twenty four Pounders that were at Albany and such other Military Stores, as will not be immediately wanted down the River, will be ordered on and what are not wanted here, sent to Carlisle, by General Knox. That place will then be the grand Arsenal of all Artillery and Stores on this side of Hudson's River, as Springfield

will be of those on the East side. I am getting the heavy Cannon that were saved out of the Shipping upon Delaware, mounted upon travelling Carriages, they are very fine Iron 18

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and 24 pounders and I suppose they will amount to about twelve. If we should take a post below the City, they with the heavy brass Artillery and the Mortars will be of the greatest use to us, but the Cannon will be too heavy to move any great distance. I have the honor &c.

P.S. I shall be much obliged to you for hurrying on those Levies towards the Camp, who march thro' York. We have hitherto found that a vast many of them have straggled and have been lost, before they have reached the Army, by making repeated Halts.<sup>77</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 21, 1778.

Sir: I have the honor of yours of the 14th and 15th instant. In consequence of the Resolves transmitted to me I have dispatched an Express to the Marquis de la Fayette and to Baron de Kalb, to recall them from the northward, and instead of ordering down Hazen's Regiment to rejoin this Army, I have ordered Van Schaicks immediately to the Highlands, where the publick Works are in a

<sup>77</sup>. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. It was addressed to Major General Gates, as president of the Board of War.

manner at a stand for want of Hands. Van Schaick's is a full and fresh Regiment and Hazens but weak in point of numbers, and must be considerably fatigued with their late long march.<sup>95</sup>

Inclosed you have the Copy of a letter which I received a few days ago from Doctor Rush. As this letter contains charges of a very heinous nature against the Director General Doctor Shippen for mal-practices and neglect in his department; I could not but look upon it as meant for a public accusation, and have therefore thought it incumbent upon me to lay it before Congress.<sup>96</sup> I have shewed it to Doctor Shippen, that he may be prepared



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to vindicate his character, if called upon. He tells me that Doctor Rush made charges of a similar nature, before a Committee of Congress appointed to hear them, which he could not support. If so Congress will not have further occasion to trouble themselves in the matter. I have the honor etc.<sup>97</sup>

### **\*To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley forge, March 24, 1778.

Sir: Herewith I do myself the honor to inclose copies of a Letter from an Officer<sup>33</sup> of Militia at Elizabeth Town to me, and an

95. Hazen's regiment had marched to Albany to take part in the projected Canadian expedition.

96. The letter was read in Congress on April 3 and referred to William Henry Drayton, Samuel Huntington, and John Banister.

97. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

33. Col. Sylvanus Seely. The letter was dated Mar. 20, 1778. A copy by Harrison is filed with this letter of Washington's in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

extract of a Letter from one of Mr. Boudinot's deputies, at Boston, to him; both tending to induce a belief, that the enemy have some enterprise in contemplation. What this is, time must discover. I have this whole Winter been clearly of opinion, that Genl. Howe's movements would be very early this Spring to take advantage of the Weak state of our Army, or late, if he expected considerable reinforcement from England and meant to avail himself of his full strength.

If the first takes place, as appearances indicate, it may I think be considered as a proof of one or both of these two things; that he is either well informed (he cannot indeed be

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otherwise) of the situation and more than probably the strength of our Army, or that he expects no considerable reinforcements this year from Europe. In either case it is our indispensable duty to reinforce and arrange our Army, as speedily as possible, that we may in the first Instance be prepared for defence. In the second to take advantage of any favourable circumstance, which may happen to injure the enemy.

Whatever may be the designs of Congress with respect to the establishment of the Army, I know not but do most earnestly and devoutly recommend a speedy adoption of them, and the appointment of Officers, as our present situation at this advanced Season is truly alarming, and to me highly distressing, as I am convinced that we shall be plunged into the Campaign before our arrangements are made and the Army properly

organized. The numberless disadvantages resulting from the late appointment of Genl. Officers last year, make me look forward with infinite anxiety this; for after all the Wisdom that Congress or their Comee. can use in the choice of Officers, many will be disgusted, resignations of some and perhaps non-acceptance of others follow. Before matters then can be brought to a proper tone much time will be lost and a great deal of trouble and vexation encountered; to overcome which, is not the work of a day and till they are overcome confusion, disorder, and loss must prevail; in the mean while Order, regularity, and discipline, which requires the vigilance of every Officer to establish and must flow from the General Officers in every Army is neglected, or not entered upon in time to effect; thus it happened last year and Brigades and Divisions became vacant to the great injury of the Service.

As it is not improper for Congress to have some idea of the present temper of the Army it may not be amiss to remark in this place that since the Month of August last between two and three hundred Officers have resigned their Commissions and many others with difficulty dissuaded from it. In the Virginia line only, not less than Six Colonels as good as any in the Service have left it lately, and more I am told are in the humour to do so.

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Highly advantageous also would it be if the Recruits and draughts from No. Carolina and Virginia were not Suffered to Halt on their way to Camp (under pretence of getting equip'd) but sent forward and incorporated into the different Regiments of their respective States, as soon as it could be done.

Out of the number of Men said to be draughted in Virginia last fall and others from No. Carolina very few have joined the Army, but owing to desertion and other causes have dwindled to nothing, and this will always be the case with new recruits (especially those who are unwillingly drawn forth) if much time is spent in getting them to their Regiments under the care of proper Officers; this shews the necessity, if the Season, and other powerful reasons did not loudly call for it of hastening them to the Army.

My Sollicitude for the preservation of the communication of the No. River gives me very uneasy Sensations on account of our Posts there, and will excuse my again asking if the Troops to the Northward except such as are necessary for the defence of Fort Schuyler can be so advantageously employed as at the Works on that River. A respectable force at those Posts would awe New York and divide Genl. Howes force, or expose the City. To depend too much upon Militia, is in my opinion putting every thing to hazard.

If I should appear uncommonly anxious, respecting the several Matters contained in this Letter by repeating them, Congress will do me the justice I hope to believe, that I am actuated by no views but such as are prompted by circumstances, and the advanced Season. With the greatest respect I have the honor, etc.

P.S. Your Letter of the 21st Instt. is just come to hand, containing sevl. Resolves of Congress.<sup>34</sup>

34. Read in Congress on March 27 and referred to the Board of War. The resolves transmitted in the letter from the President of Congress were those of March 18, 19, and 21. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, March 24, 1778.

Sir: Colo. Charles Lewis of the 14th Virginia Regiment will have the honor to deliver you this. He waits on Congress to resign his Commission. I have interested myself, but in vain, to retain him in service, and have only to add my regret at the loss of so good an Officer. I have the honor, etc.<sup>35</sup>

**To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 25, 1778.

Sir: I was yesterday favoured with yours of the 17th by Major Campbell.<sup>41</sup> Our numbers of Effectives is so reduced by inoculation, that it is impossible to spare the few Men of the 13th Virginia Regiment just at this time. I shall send Colo. Russell<sup>42</sup> immediately to Pittsburg to collect and take the Command of by far the greatest part of the Regiment, who are now straggling about that Country. Major Campbell informs me, that their ought to be four hundred Men there. There are not above one hundred here sick and well. You have been misinformed

35. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

41. Maj. Richard Campbell, of the Thirteenth Virginia Regiment. He was wounded at Camden, N. J., in April, 1781; killed at Eutaw Springs, S. C., in September, 1781.

42. Col. William Russell, of the Thirteenth Virginia Regiment. He was transferred to the Fifth Virginia Regiment in September, 1778; taken prisoner at Charleston, S.C., in May, 1780; exchanged in November, 1780; served to November, 1783.

as to the reinlistment of the 12th and 13th Virginia Regiments. The Men of Seven of the oldest Regiments had been inlisted for two years, and as their times expired in the Winter,

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many of them reinlisted upon being allowed furloughs to go home for two Months. Upon Enquiry you will find the above to be the fact, and that the reinlistment was confined to the seven Regiments.

All the men that are now in the 8th and 12th Pennsylvania Regiments came originally with them, they never having received any recruits. I mention this, because it appears from your Letter, that you thought most of those first inlisted had been carried off by casualties of different kinds and that others had been raised to fill their places. It is to be wished that our force may be such, that we may be able to send succours to the Westward, should the Indian War, that is apprehended, break out. But should the situation of affairs here require us to keep our whole force together, I imagine there will be no difficulty in raising a body of Men upon the Frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania for the purpose of defending them. I have the honor etc.<sup>43</sup>

### **To FRANCIS HOPKINSON**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 28, 1778.

Sir: I have been favoured with yours of the 16th. and 24th instant;

43. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. The letter was addressed to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, as president of the board.

the first inclosing sundry papers relating to the Case of Captns. Robinson and Galt who have been detained after going into Philadelphia under the sanction of a Flag. I have made a demand of Capt. Robinson, as he was previously named and a passport regularly obtained for him. I have also endeavoured to procure the release of Capt. Galt who I must need say has been guilty of a very imprudent action, in attempting to pass himself as a private seaman or Boatman, which strictly speaking brings him under the imputation of a Spy; but I am in hopes that the matter may be got over. Genl. Howe has not yet answered my letter upon the Subject.

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I am obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in removing the Stores and more so for the offer of the Rice, Oil and Fish, the two first of which will be particularly useful at this time to the Hospital. The Rice and Oil will be removed immediately, as orders are given to procure Waggons for the purpose. The Commissary of purchases at Bordentown or Trenton will give proper receipts for them, by which you may charge them to the Continent. I am &ca.72

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 29, 1778.

Sir: I have been honoured with your's of the 25th.

72. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

inclosing duplicates of two former Resolves of Congress, and a Resolve of the 23d Inst. accepting the resignation of Colo. Charles Webb.

Since mine of the 24th. Mr. Boudinot has communicated the following intelligence being part of a letter to him,

I have lately received some intelligence from New York that we may make ourselves easy in Jersey as all the force that can be spared is to be sent to join Genl. Howe. 2500 are actually on board transports and lying at the watering place.

I have this day received a letter from Genl Smallwood dated yesterday, at Wilmington, in which he says,

The Enemy about four days ago had a Fleet of near 50 Sail standing up the River which I fancy was from New York, and yesterday their foraging Fleet went up without touching upon this side the Delaware except three or four small parties about Port Penn who have

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been constantly drove off by a party of 100 of our Men who have been guarding and aiding the removal of the forage on that shore, which is at length happily effected.

A Philadelphia<sup>85</sup> of the 27th. also mentions that a Fleet of upwards of 40 Sail had left the Hook on Sunday and that they were said to be in the River.

From all the above circumstances, I have no doubt but the Troops have arrived from New York. I have heard nothing further from Rhode Island since I wrote to you last. I have the honor &ca.<sup>86</sup>

85. The word "paper" or "newspaper" inadvertently omitted.

86. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 1, 1778.

Sir: Since I had the honour to address you upon the 29th ulto. I have not been able to learn, with any precision, whether the transports that arrived brought any considerable number of Troops. A Hessian Deserter says there were only a few German convalescents on board. If so, the Fleet with 2500 [troops] mentioned in my last, is not arrived; supposing they were bound to Philadelphia.

Genl St. Clair arrived yesterday from Boston, and as he seems very anxious to have his matter determined one way or the other, I beg leave to recall the attention of Congress to my letter of the 27th. Febry. upon the subject. Having received no information, since that time, which serves to direct my judgment as to the charge which it will be proper to exhibit against General St Clair, I have only again to request that Congress or the Committee will be pleased to point out the particular charges upon which the Court shall proceed. I could wish that this matter might not be delayed on several accounts. General St. Clair is in a very delicate Situation and feels it sensibly. He was kept inactive great part of last

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Campaign, and probably will the whole of this, except his trial can shortly be brought on, as it will be almost impossible to find time to hold a Court after the scene of Action opens. If he should be acquitted, he would render very essential Service, especially at this time when we have so few General Officers.

If condemned, his place may be immediately filled. It will besides take him some little time to prepare for his defence after he knows the particular Charges alledged against him. I have the honor &c.<sup>21</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 3, 1778.

Sir: Captain Lee of the light Dragoons and the Officers under his command having uniformly distinguished themselves by a conduct of exemplary zeal, prudence and bravery, I took occasion on a late signal instance of it to express the high sense I entertained of their merit, and to assure him, that it should not fail of being properly noticed. I was induced to give this assurance, from a conviction, that it is the wish of Congress to give every encouragement to merit, and that they would chearfully embrace so favorable an opportunity of manifesting this disposition. I had it in contemplation at the time, in case no other method, more eligible, could be adopted, to make him an offer of a place in my family. I have consulted the Committee of Congress upon the Subject, and we were mutually of opinion, that the giving Capt. Lee the command of two troops of Horse on the proposed establishment with the Rank of Major,

21. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

to act as an independent partisan Corps, would be a mode of rewarding him, very advantageous to the Service. Capt. Lee's genius particularly adapts him to a command of this nature, and it will be most agreeable to him, of any station, in which he could be placed.



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I beg leave to recommend this measure to Congress and shall be obliged by their decision as speedily as may be convenient. The Campaign is fast approaching, and there will probably be very little time, to raise and prepare the Corps for it. It is a part of the plan to give Mr. Lindsay<sup>36</sup> the command of the second Troop and to make Mr. Peyton,<sup>37</sup> Capt. Lieutenant of the first.<sup>38</sup> I am, etc.<sup>39</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 4, 1778.

Sir: I have now the honor to acknowledge your several letters of the 21st, 29th and 30th ulto. with their inclosures, which have been duly received.

It gives me pain to observe, they appear to contain several implications, by which my sensibility is not a little wounded.

I find myself extremely embarrassed by the Steps

36. Lieut. William Lindsay, of the First Continental Dragoons. He had been wounded in a skirmish near Valley Forge in January, 1778; was made a captain of Lee's Legion Apr. 7, 1778; resigned in October of that year.

37. Lieut. Henry Peyton, of the First Continental Dragoons. He was made captain-lieutenant of Lee's Legion Apr. 7, 1778; a full captain in July, 1778; major in February, 1780; killed at Charleston, S. C., in May of that year.

38. Congress approved Washington's recommendations by its resolves of Apr. 7, 1778.

39. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

I had taken towards an Exchange of prisoners and the formation of a general Cartel, making more ample provision for their future accomodation and relief.

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The Views of Congress seem to be very different from what I supposed them, when I entered into my late engagements with General Howe. Their Resolution of the 30th ulto. pointedly requiring a strict adherence to all former ones upon the subject, will in all probability render them impracticable.

I considered some of their Resolutions as dictated on the principle of retaliation, and did not imagine the terms they contained would be insisted on, in negotiating an agreement calculated to remedy the evils which occasioned them. In most respects they might be substantially complied with, but there are some points to which an exact conformity must of necessity destroy the Idea of a Cartel. One is, the obliging the Enemy to pay Gold and Silver on equal terms for continental Currency, estimating the Articles supplied them at their actual prices with us, as seems to be the design of the Resolve of the 19th. December. Another is, that subjecting the inhabitants of these States, taken in Arms against them, to trial and punishment agreeable to the Resolve of the 30th of the same month.

I am well aware that appearances ought to be upheld, and that we should avoid as much as possible recognizing by any public Act, the depreciation of our currency; but I conceive this end would be answered, as far as might be necessary, by stipulating that all money payments should be made in Gold and

Silver, being the common Medium of Commerce among Nations, at the rate of 4/6 for a Spanish milled dollar &c. by fixing the price of Rations on an equitable Scale, relatively to our respective circumstances, and providing for the payment of what we may owe, by sending in provisions and selling it at their market. The Rates of Money and the prices of provisions and other Commodities differ every where, and in treaties of a similar nature between any two States, it is requisite for mutual convenience, to ascertain some common Ratio, both for the value of Money in payments and for the Rates of those Articles on which they may arise.

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It was determined, on mature consideration, not to concede any thing expressly that should contradict the Resolution of the 30th Decemr. but at the same time, if it is designed to be the rule of practice, it is easy to perceive it would at once overturn any Cartel that could be formed. Genl. Howe would never consent to observing it on his part, if such a practice were to exist on ours. Though the law ought not to be contravened, by an express article admitting the exchangeability of such persons, yet if it is not suffered to sleep, it is in vain to expect the operations of it will ever be acquiesced in by the Enemy.<sup>54</sup>

The measures I have taken must evince that it is my determination to pay the fullest attention to the interests of Citizens and to the rights of General Lee in the treaty; and I think it but justice to the Gentlemen appointed to negotiate it, to declare, that I know them to be so fully impressed with the importance of both of those objects,

54. The resolve of December 30 ordered "That all persons, inhabitants of any of these United States, who have voluntarily inlisted, or shall so inlist with or join the enemy of the said states, and have been or shall be taken in arms, be confined in close goals, subject to be delivered up to the respective states to which they belong, to be dealt with agreeable to the laws thereof, and that the commissary general of prisoners and his deputies be directed. from time to time, to transmit to the respective States the names of such of their citizens who have been made prisoners."

This placed the matter entirely in the hands of the States and naturally would have left no civilians available for exchange with the Continental authority. It had also been resolved by Congress (Dec. 19, 1777) that no exchange take place until all accounts for subsistence of prisoners between the United States and Great Britain be settled and the balance due the United States be paid. "The beauty of it is," wrote Alexander Hamilton to Governor Clinton (March 12), "on a fair settlement, we shall without doubt be in Mr. Howe's debt; and in the meantime, we detain his officers and soldiers as a security for the payment, perhaps forever. At any rate, it cannot take place all next summer."

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as to make them chearfully observant of the injunctions of Congress, so far as not to conclude any agreement, of which the exchange of Genl. Lee and the alternative respecting Citizens, are not essential parts. These points had been early determined on.

It is with no small concern that I have been obliged to trouble Congress upon the subjects of this letter, and should they appear to them in the same light they do to me, and they should think proper to remove the obstacles which now oppose the Business in hand, I must request they will be pleased to communicate their determinations, as expeditiously as possible, that the Commissioners may govern themselves accordingly and either proceed to forming a Cartel or to put an end to the negociation. Before the Resolves of the 30th came to hand, they had met and been in treaty two days, with a prospect of a favorable accomodation.

I am happy to inform Congress, that General Lee will be out on parole tomorrow, in place of General Prescott; and I have every reason to expect, if the negociation can be continued on admissible terms, that his *Exchange* the releasement of Col. Campbell and the Hessian Field Officers. It is agreed that Lt. Colo. Allen shall be exchanged for Lt. Colo. Campbell.

The importunate applications of Colo. Lee<sup>55</sup> and Major Swasey<sup>56</sup> to leave the Service oblige me to lay the matter before Congress. Colo. Lee's letter upon the subject was transmitted me the 25th January, but hoping he might change his mind, I deferred writing to Congress on his request. He has renewed it again in urgent terms thro' Genl. Heath, and I have only to observe, that it is a painful circumstance to see Officers of their Merit leaving the Service. It is the case every day. I shall be obliged, by Congress informing me of the dates of the Resignations by the Colonels in the Virginia line. I have only received the date of Colo. Lewis's.

55. Col. William Raymond Lee. His resignation is dated Jan. 24, 1778.

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56. Maj. Joseph Swasey, of Lee's Additional Continental regiment. He did not resign finally until in July, 1778.

Inclosed is a Letter from Captain Cottineau of the Ship Ferdinand, with an Invoice of her Cargo. The letter only came to hand yesterday, and as it is of an old date, it is highly probable that the Goods are sold. If they are not, from the Captains desire to give the publick a preference in the Sale, Congress will have an opportunity of directing them to be purchased. Most of them would be proper for the Army. I have the honour etc.<sup>57</sup>

### **To THE COMMITTEE FROM CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, April 9, 1778.

Gentn.: By a Resolve of Congress, the appointment of Officer to the Corps which Brigadier General Count Polaski is authorized to raise, has been referred to your decision in conjunction with me; as I know the superior confidence which a Commandant places in

57. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. When received by Congress (April 7) this letter was referred to Francis Dana, Samuel Chase, and William Duer. This committee reported the draft of a reply (April 10) which underwent various modifications and amendments which were insulting to Washington. Thomas Burke, a Delegate from North Carolina, set himself to stop such a proceeding and when the fierce debate lasted far into the night of April to, Burke "declared the states might vote as they pleased, he would upon his honor adjourn himself; and thereupon he immediately withdrew, by which means Congress could not proceed to business" [for lack of a quorum]. Mr. Edward Langworthy, a Delegate from Georgia, also departed. Congress sent a messenger to these two Delegates requesting their attendance. Langworthy replied that he would return presently; but Burke was less diplomatic. He sent word "Devil take him if he would come; it was too late and too unreasonable." (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Apr. 10, 11, and 24, 1778, for the record of this Burke filibuster.) Burke returned to North Carolina, reported his action

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and grounds therefore to the State legislature, received the full commendation of that body and was returned as a Delegate to the Continental Congress.

Officers of his own choice, I have given him my approbation of the Gentlemen whom he has nominated; it remains with you to decide in their favor, or have others substituted. I have the honour, etc.<sup>81</sup>

### **\*To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, April 10, 1778.

Sir: I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 4th Instt., inclosing a resolve of Congress of the same date, empowering me to call forth five thousand Militia from the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. I thank Congress for the power; at the same time it is incumbent on me to assure them, that granting the practicability of collecting such a number, it would prove a work of time, difficulty and expence; to evince which, I need only to recur to the experience of last Campaign on similar occasions, and to remind you that it was not possible to obtain 1000 Men, nor sometimes even one hundred from this State, altho the former number was required, and promised, for the purpose of covering during the Winter, the Country between Schuylkill and Delaware.

As this resolve appears to have been made in consequence

81. In the writing of John Laurens. The letter was sent to Congress by the committee and read in that body on April 18.

of my Letters of the 24th and 29th Ultio. which were founded on conjecture, and in some degree misinformation; and as the execution of it would, exclusive of the inconveniences above mentioned, I am perswaded, have a tendency to injure the completion of the Continental Regiments, I shall call for a small part only of the number allowed; but could wish that Hartleys Regiment were ordered immediately to Camp, and the duties of it

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performed by Militia. In like manner I would propose that all remote guards should be composed of Militia and that the several purposes, for which men are drawn from the Continental Troops, should be answered by them. This would be the means of drawing together a considerable number of Men, who are in a manner lost to the Army; and of employing the Militia to the best advantage possible.

The great end of my letter to Congress of the 24th Ult<sup>o</sup>. seems to have been mistaken. My views were not turned to reinforcements of Militia. To know whether the old establishment of the Army or the new, as agreed upon by the Committee, is the choice of Congress and in what manner the Regiments of this State, and the additional are to be reduced. Officers for the whole appointed &ca., were my objects. These are objects of the greatest moment, as they may, in their Consequences, involve the fate of America; for I will undertake to say, that it is next to impossible when the Season is so far advanced, properly to accomplish those changes, appointments and the dependant arrangements for the ensuing Campaign. Should any convulsion happen, or movement take place, they will be altogether impracticable. Justice to my own character, as well as duty to the

publick, constrain me to repeat these things; their consequences are more easily conceived than described.

It may be said by some Sir, that my wish to see the Officers of this Army under a more respectable establishment, is the cause of my Solicitude, and carries me too far. To such I can declare, that my anxiety proceeds from the causes above mentioned. If my opinion is asked with respect to the necessity of making this provision for the Officers, I am ready to declare, that I do most religiously believe the salvation of the cause depends upon it, and without it, your Officers will moulder to nothing, or be composed of low and illiterate men void of capacity for this, or any other business. To prove this, I can with truth aver, that scarce a day passes without the offer of two or three Commissions; and my advices from the Eastward, and Southward are, that numbers who had gone home on furlough, mean not to return; but are establishing themselves in more lucrative employments. Let

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Congress determine what will be the consequence of this Spirit. Personally, as an Officer, I have no interest in their decision, because I have declared, and now repeat it, that I never will receive the smallest benefit from the half pay establishment, but, as a Man who fights under the weight of a proscription, and as a Citizen who wishes to see the liberty of his Country established upon a permanent foundation and whose property depends upon the success of our Arms, I am deeply interested. But all this apart, and justice out of the question, upon the single ground of œconomy and public saving,

I will maintain the utility of it; for I have not the least doubt, that untill Officers consider their Commissions in an honorable, and interested point of view, and are afraid to endanger them by negligence and inattention, that no order, regularity, or care, either of the Men, or Public property, will prevail. To prove this, I need only refer to the General Courts Martial which are constantly sitting for the trial of them, and the number that have been cashiered within the last three Months, for misconduct of different kinds. By Officers who are just returned from Massachusetts bay, I learn that there is not the least prospect of getting Men from thence, before the Month of June, if then, and indeed, that there is no reason to expect any number that will deserve the name of reinforcement, for the Continental Regiments this Campaign. The Towns being only called upon to furnish the deficiency of their last year's quota, so that all subsequent casualties are disregarded, and the fifteen Regiments of that State which may now perhaps want 4000 Men to compleat them, will receive only 500 if the Towns came within that number of their complement last year. What change the requisition of Congress of the [15th]<sup>86</sup> Feby. may effect I shall not undertake to say, if it has not a Speedy and powerful operation our prospects in that quarter will be exceedingly unpromising. A Gentleman from New Hampshire some little time since informed me that matters were nearly in the same train there, notwithstanding a resolve for the completion of their Battalions and, the Inclosed copy of a Letter No. 1 from General Putnam,<sup>87</sup> whom I have desired to remain in Connecticut for some time in order to

86. The date is left blank in Washington's letter, but in the draft, in John Laurens's writing, it is given as the 15th.



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87. The copy of Putnam's letter is not filed in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, nor is the original found in the *Washington Papers*.

forward the Recruits from that State conveys his Ideas of what may be expected from thence. What New York, New Jersey, and No. Carolina have done, or are about to do, I know not. Pennsylvania and Maryland have tried the effect of voluntary enlistments to little purpose, and the first, in direct contradiction to the most pointed injunctions laid on the Officers, have their Recruits composed chiefly of Deserters who will embrace the first opportunity of escaping with our Arms.

Virginia, it is true, has proceeded to a draught; but the number, besides being in itself inadequate, has been lessened by desertion, and the deficiency of the Regiments on the other hand, being increased by death and desertion, their strength will probably fall very far short of the new establishment.

This Sir is not a flattering Picture of our Affairs, but the representation is just, and it is incumbent on me to exhibit it in my own defence, as notwithstanding all these unfavorable circumstances (and what is to me a certain prospect of being plunged into the Campaign before our arrangements are made, Officers appointed &c) great matters I perceive are expected from our activity this Spring; in proportion therefore will the disappointment be felt, by those who are Sanguine. For want of the ratification of Congress, the horse establishment, Companies of Sappers, Provost Marshalsey &ca. &ca. &ca. as agreed to by the Committee, and recommended for their consideration, are intirely at a stand; at a time when we ought to be deriving benefits from their execution. In a word,

at no period since the commencement of the War, have I felt more painful sensations on account of delay than at the present, and urged by them, I have expressed myself without reserve.

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By a Letter just received from General Weedon I am informed of his intention to resign, if General Woodford should be restored to his former Rank, which he had not then heard. General Muhlenberg is now ballancing on the same point; one therefore, if not two Brigadiers will be wanted for that State. The disadvantages resulting from the frequent resignations in the Virginia Line; the changes of commanding Officers to the Regiments and other causes equally distressing, have injured that Corps beyond conception, and have been the means of reducing very respectable Regiments, in some instances to a mere handful of Men, and this will ever be the case till Officers can be fixed by something equivalent to the sacrifice they make. To reason otherwise, and suppose that public virtue alone will enable men to forego the ease and comforts of life, to encounter the hardships and dangers of War for a bare subsistence, when their companions and friends are amassing large fortunes, is viewing human nature, rather as it should be, than as it really is.

The Clothier Genl. of the Army as well as the heads of every other department, should be in Camp, near the Corer. in Chief; otherwise it is impossible that the operations of War can be conducted with energy and precision. I wish most sincerely that this, as not the least essential part of the business settled with the Comee. were decided and a thorough investigation were had into the

conduct of this department, as it is a matter of universal astonishment, that we should be deficient in any article of Cloathing when it is commonly asserted that the Eastern States alone can furnish Materials enough, to cloath 100,000 Men. If this be fact there is a fatal error somewhere, to which may be attributed the death and desertion of thousands.

I shall make no apology for the freedom of this Letter. To inform Congress of such facts as materially affect the Service, I conceive to be one great and essential part of my duty to them, and myself. My agreement with the Comee. entitled me to expect upwards of Forty thousand Continental Troops, exclusive of Artillery and Horse, for the Service of the ensuing Campaign, including those to be employed in the defence of the North River;

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instead of these, what are my prospects? Major Genl. the Marquis de la fayette is arrived at Camp, and will resume the Command of his division. The Baron de Kalb is expected in a few days. The Inclosure No. 2. is the copy of a Letter from Colo. Shreive<sup>88</sup> of the 2d Jersey Battn. containing an Acct. of the destruction of the Salt, and Salt Works at Squan and No. 3 of a Letter from General McDougall shewing the State of affairs in that department. With very great respect I have the honr. etc.

P.S. Your favor of the 8th Instt, inclosing the Act of Congress appointing Captn. Lee Majr. and Commandant of an Independt.

88. Col. Israel Shreve.

Corps, is this momt. come to hand.<sup>89</sup>

### **To FRANCIS HOPKINSON AND JOHN WHARTON<sup>4</sup>**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 11, 1778.

Gentlemen: I am favoured with yours of the 31st. Ult. All the Articles which you send over, are to be directed to the Commy. Genl. of purchases or his deputy in Camp and they will give Receipts upon delivery.

I have never had an answer from General Howe respecting Captains Robinson and Galt. Our Commissioners are now setting at Newtown, to endeavour to procure a general release of prisoners, and to settle a more extensive Cartel than has hitherto subsisted. I am in hopes if they agree, that Captn. Galt may be redeemed notwithstanding his indiscretion. If Captn. Robinson is detained, I shall not fail to make a demand of *him* in a proper manner. I am etc.<sup>5</sup>

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89. A copy of this letter, in the writing of John Laurens, corrected by Washington, is in the *Washington Papers*. The letter was read in Congress on April 13 and referred to William Duer, Samuel Chase, and Francis Dana.

4. Of the Continental Navy Board, at Bordentown, N.J.

5. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, April 17, 1778.

Sir: The bearer Mr. Ernest<sup>44</sup> was introduced to me yesterday, by a Letter from Governor Livingston, an extract of which, so far as it relates to him, I take the liberty to inclose. From the Governor's account, Mr. Ernest is an honest man, warmly attached to our fortune, and who, for the part he has taken has been persecuted with unusual severity. I know not what his talents are, but if they are such as qualify him for any services of a public nature, his persevering fidelity and distress seem to give him a claim to a favourable notice. I have the honor, etc.<sup>45</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, April 18, 1778.

Sir: On Thursday evening I had the Honor to receive your Two Letters of the 14th. Instant.

I am much obliged by the fresh assurances, which Congress are pleased to make me of their confidence, and they may

44. An inhabitant of New York.

45. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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be satisfied, that I wish nothing more ardently, than that a good and perfect agreement should subsist between us.

The negotiation between the Commissioners is ended, without effecting a Cartel. Nor do I suppose, from the information I have received on the subject, that there is any good prospect, that one will ever be formed, or at least for a great while, on a liberal and an extensive plan. A report of the proceedings of the Commissioners on our part, at their several meetings, I take the liberty to inclose. The papers No. 1 contain the letters between General Howe and myself, stipulating the neutrality of German Town, our Respective powers, and the result of the meeting there. No. 2 the subsequent proceedings at Newtown.<sup>58</sup> The old agreement, I presume, continues, and under it we must carry on exchanges.<sup>59</sup>

General Muhlenberg has communicated his determination to resign, but has promised not to leave his Brigade, till Congress shall appoint another General in his room, provided it is done in any reasonable time.

By postponing my call upon the Militia as mentioned in my last of the 10th, I did not mean to decline it altogether. I did not see the necessity of calling out 5000 for the sole purpose of defence; and in the present situation of things, I cannot perceive my way sufficiently clear for offensive measures, as I do not know when to expect the Recruits from the different States, nor what prospect the Commissary has of Provision. As we only get it yet from hand to mouth, assembling the Militia, unless for the purpose

58. These inclosures are filed with Washington's letter to Congress. They are copies in the writing of various of Washington's aides of the following: Lieut. Thomas Eyre, of the Twenty-third Foot, British Army, to Howe, Jan. 2, 1777; deposition of Sergt. Thomas Wiggins, of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, British Army; Washington's letter to Howe, Jan. 8, 1778; Howe's letter to Washington, Jan. 8, 1778; Howe's letter to Washington, Jan. 18, 1778; Howe's letter to Washington, Jan. 19, 1778; ration of prisoners in Philadelphia, Jan.

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19, 1778; Washington's letter to Howe, Jan. 20, 1778; Washington's letter to Howe, Jan. 30, 1778; Howe's letter to Washington, Feb. 5, 1778; Washington's letter to Howe, Feb. 10, 1778; Powers of British Commissioners, Mar. 5, 1778; Howe's letter to Washington, Mar. 27, 1778; Powers of American Commissioners, Mar. 28, 1778; Washington's letter to Howe, Mar. 29, 1778; Report of American commissioners to Washington, Apr. 15, 1778; Resolves of Congress, Dec. 19, 1777, and Jan. 21, 1778 (broadside).

59. The powers given the British exchange commissioners by Sir William Howe were not sufficiently binding on Great Britain to satisfy the American commissioners, who possessed powers delegated to them from Congress. Howe declined to change his powers and the negotiations ended.

of defence, should be the last thing done, as they soon become impatient, and are very expensive in the articles of stores, Camp utensils, Provisions, &c.

The inclosed Draught of a Bill, was brought to Head Quarters Yesterday afternoon by a Gentleman, who informed me, that a large Cargoe of them had been just sent out of Philadelphia. Whether this insidious proceeding is genuine and imported in the Packet, which arrived a few days ago, or contrived in Philadelphia is a point undetermined and immaterial; but it is certainly founded in principles of the most wicked, diabolical baseness, meant to poison the minds of the people and detach the wavering, at least, from our cause.<sup>60</sup> I suppose it will obtain a place in the papers, and am not without anxiety, that it will have a malignant influence. I would submit it, whether it will not be highly expedient for Congress to investigate it, in all its parts, and to expose, in the most striking manner, the injustice, delusion and fraud it contains. I trust it will be attacked in every shape, in every part of the Continent. I have the honor to be, &c.<sup>61</sup>

60. See Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Apr. 20, 1778, *post*.

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61. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade. The letter was read in Congress on April 20 anti referred to a committee consisting of Gouverneur Morris, William Henry Drayton, and Francis Dana. On April 21 the committee brought in its report., approving the conduct of the American commissioners and Congress immediately adopted the report.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Valley Forge, April 20, 1778.

Sir: With your Letter of the 17th and its inclosures, I was duly honoured on Saturday afternoon.

When I addressed you on the 18th, I was doubtful whether the draught of the Bill then transmitted was not spurious and contrived in Philadelphia; but its authenticity, I am almost certain, is not to be questioned.<sup>68</sup> The information from Philadelphia seems clear and conclusive, that it came over in the Packet, with Lord North's Speech on the introduction of it into Parliament. I inclose a paper containing his speech which just came to hand. This Bill I am persuaded will pass into a Law. Congress will perceive by the Ministers Speech, that it aims at objects of the greatest extent and importance, and will no doubt, in one way or other, involve the most interesting consequences to this Country. I have the honor etc.<sup>69</sup>

68. The drafts of the *Conciliatory Bills* were referred to Gouverneur Morris, William Henry Drayton, and Francis Dana, who brought in a report (April 22) which, after a long analysis of the bills, recommended: "that these United States cannot, with propriety, hold any conference or treaty with any commissioners on the part of Great Britain, unless they shall, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or else, in positive and express terms, acknowledge the independence of the said states." The report, drawn up by Gouverneur Morris, was unanimously adopted.

69. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, April 23, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty to transmit you a Letter, which I received yesterday from Governor Tryon,<sup>89</sup> including the draughts of the Two Bills, I forwarded before, with his certificate of the manner in which they came to his hands; accompanied by his more extraordinary and impertinent request, that thro' my means the contents of them should be communicated to the Officers and Men of this Army. This Engine of Ministry, from Governor Livingston's account, is very industriously circulating Copies of these Draughts, in obedience to their and his Royal masters mandates. The Letter which I inclose, and a Triplicate came to hand at one time. Some future conveyance, it is probable, will present me the Duplicate.

I would also take the liberty to inclose you the Evening Post No. 475 which Governor Livingston was so obliging as to send me yesterday. Were we not fully satisfied from our experience, that there are no artifices, no measures too black or wicked for the Enemy or there adherents to attempt, in order to promote their views, we might be astonished at the daring confidence, in defiance of the opinion of the World manifested in a publication in this paper, purporting a Resolution of Congress of the 20th Febry. This proceeding is infamous to the

89. Tryon wrote: "Having been honored with His Majesty's Instructions to Circulate the Inclosures; I take the liberty, to offer them to you, for your Candid Consideration, and to recommend that through your means, the Officers and Men under your Command may be acquainted with their Contents". Tryon's letter is in the *Washington Papers*. (See Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. William Tryon, Apr. 26, 1778, *post*.)

last degree, and calculated to produce the most baneful consequences, by exciting an opposition in the people to our drafting system, and embarrassing, at least, the only



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probable mode now left us for raising Men. I think it of great importance that the Forgery should be announced in the most public manner, and I am the more induced to this opinion, from Govr. Livingston's account of the disagreeable operation it has had, and is still likely to produce, if not contradicted. If it is, and with a few strictures, I should hope that it will excite in the breasts of all our Countrymen, a just and generous contempt of the Enemy for such a dirty wicked proceeding.

I was last night honored with your favor of the 18th Inst. with the proceedings alluded to. A general plan of operations for the campaign is indispensibly essential to be settled. I have thought much upon the subject and some propositions respecting it were put in the hands of all the General Officers here on Tuesday Evening, for their consideration. I also intended to send a Messenger this day to meet General Gates, supposing him to be on his way to Hudsons river, and to request his call at this Camp, that we might enter into a full and free discussion of the point. There is not a moment to be delayed, in forming some general system, in my opinion, and I only wait the arrival of Generals Gates and Mifflin to summon Council for the purpose. I have the honour etc.

P.S. It is confidently reported and I have little doubt of the truth of it, that Sir Win. Howe is recalled, and that Genl. Clinton is to succeed him in command.<sup>90</sup> I also have the pleasure to transmit a list of sundry Officers exchanged on the 21st Inst.<sup>91</sup>

### **To FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE AND JOHN BANISTER<sup>92</sup>**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 23, 1778.

Gentlemen: I have the honor of yours of the 16th instant. I know of no more eligible mode of remitting the 30,080 dollars for payment of the additional Bounty to the reinlisted Men of the Virginia Regiments, than by giving a special order to the paymaster General to pay that Sum to me or my order. I only beg, that the Gentlemen of the treasury Board may be reminded, that as pay is due the greatest part of the Troops from the month of January,

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they should look upon the 30,000 m dollars as extra, and therefore send a sum besides adequate to the exigencies of the Army. I am &ca.93

90. Howe's request to be relieved was accepted and Germain's letter directing him to turn over the command in America to Sir Henry Clinton is dated Feb. 4, 1778. It was received by Howe on April 9.

91. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

92. Virginia Delegates to Congress.

93. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, April 25, 1778.

Sir: I beg leave to inform Congress, that the report of the Commissioners coming, according to intelligence received yesterday by a Person of Philadelphia, is confidently believed, and it is there thought, that they will very soon arrive.<sup>7</sup> I think it almost certain, that the matter will not be delayed, as the conduct of Ministry in not sending them immediately after their former propositions has been much reprobated; and as it may be of much importance to improve the first impressions of the people upon the occasion.

Lord Amherst, Admiral Kepple and General Murray are said to be the persons appointed, and it is likely they are vested with both civil and military powers. The information was thro' the channel of a sensible, intelligent Man well known and of esteemed credit. He is connected with the British Army, having two or three Brothers in it. I shall transmit the earliest accounts, I may receive from time to time on this very interesting subject. I have the honour etc.<sup>8</sup>

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7. British peace commissioners to America. They were Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnstone, They arrived in Philadelphia early in June, 1778.

8. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, April 27, 1778.

Sir: I had the Honor, yesterday afternoon, to receive your Letter of the 24th, continued to the 25th, with its important inclosures.

Congress will be pleased to accept my sincere thanks for the fresh instance of confidence, manifested in their Resolution of the 23d and other proceedings, and they may rest assured, that whatever powers are intrusted to me, shall be unvariably directed to promote the interest of these States.<sup>20</sup> If in any case there should be a misapplication or failure in the execution, they will be the effect of mistake and not of design.

I shall take measures for distributing the report of the Committee on Lord North's Bills, and the Resolutions of the 23d, inviting delinquents to their allegiance, and to the protection of these States. This proceeding appears to me founded in great, good policy, and I should hope, that it will be attended with many valuable consequences; but this can only be proved by the event.

Tho' I wish most heartily for the aid of General Lee in Council, and upon every other occasion, Yet as the time of his return is uncertain, or at least will be several days before it takes place; and as it seems to me, that there is not a moment to lose in forming some general system for our Operations, I should think it

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20. "Resolved, That the powers vested in General Washington by the resolutions of 17 September, 8 October and 10 December, 1777, be renewed and extended to the 10 day of August, 1778." These were the so-called plenary powers.

inexpedient for General Gates to delay coming to Camp, 'till his arrival. After a plan is digested, there will be a great deal of time expended before things will be in a proper train for the execution. The season is fast advancing, and the period which may be most favourable for any designs we may form, will presently arrive.

I take the liberty to transmit an Extract of a Letter from Genl. Heath, which will shew Congress, that he is pressed on all sides for money. Governor Livingston too is apprehensive, he will be under embarrassments on account of the purchase of Horses, in consequence of the recommendation of the Committee. Their Letter to him, by some means, has been mislaid in the Assembly, and he does not know exactly, the mode prescribed for the payment. I cannot inform him myself, or do what perhaps is more necessary, furnish him with money, and therefore hope that Congress or the Committee will.

I have written Major Genl. Tryon a few lines, in answer to his Letter, a copy of which is inclosed. I have the honour etc.<sup>21</sup>

21. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 27, 1778.

Sir: I have lately been informed by a Gentleman, actuated solely by a regard to the public good, and by an apprehension that we might fall short in the indispensable article of musket Cartridges particularly, that there are not, in his opinion, a sufficient number of Workmen kept employed, in the Elaboratories of Carlisle and Lebanon, to answer the exigencies

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of the Campaign. As the hint was thrown out to me, probably supposing that the publick Works were under my direction, I thought it my duty instantly to communicate it to you, that due inquiry might be made, and the Commissary General of Military Stores ordered to enlarge his plan, if it should be found insufficient. While an enquiry of this nature is on foot, perhaps it would be well to extend it to the Elaboratories to the Eastward, and see what progress they are making. I shall not add upon the importance of this subject or apologize for giving you this trouble, as you are so well acquainted with the real, as well as accidental expenditure of ammunition in the course of a Campaign, and the fatal consequences attending a scarcity of it. I have the honour etc.<sup>22</sup>

22. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. It is addressed to General Gates, as president of the Board of War.

### **To ROBERT MORRIS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, April 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: I have your favr. of the 22d instant. I take the hint in the friendly light in which it was meant, and thank you for your attention to a matter of the utmost importance. I shall write to the Board of War, and, without mentioning names, let them know that there is not that activity and exertion in the Conductors of our Elaboratories, that the advanced season demands. Some allowance must be made, when you consider that our Works were removed the last Winter from Allen Town and Easton to Lebanon and Carlisle, and that it took some time to have them properly fitted for Business; but as that has been compleated, there can be no excuse for not going on briskly now.

The management and direction, of the Elaboratories out of Camp, belongs intirely to the Board of War, and I cannot therefore with propriety send an Officer to superintend them, but I have no doubt that the Board will immediately look into the matter, and give necessary orders upon my representation. I am &ca.

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[P.S.] Quare have you ever received a Letter from me, in answer to yours by Colo. Armand?<sup>23</sup>

23. In the writing of Tench Tilghman, The P. S. is in the writing of Washington. From the original in the collection of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J., to whom the editor is indebted.

### To SAMUEL CHASE

Head Quarters, April 27, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 20th instant, I have received. The practice of seizing and confining the friends to America, in the civil line, however barbarous it may be, is a favourite engine of policy with the enemy; from which, I believe it will not be easy to make them depart. Their object is to deter men from taking an active and leading part in our governments; the firm establishment of which they foresee, will be fatal to their views. Whether the measure of seizing their friends with us, to redeem ours in their power, would put a stop to the practice is extremely doubtful. There are few persons among us, whom they esteem of sufficient consequence to desist on their account, from anything which they look upon as advancive of their interest.

With respect to Mr. Bedford, if the exchange you mention was under my direction, I should chearfully consent to its taking place. But Mr. Cook is not, that I know of, a military prisoner; consequently not subject to my disposal. I apprehend he must be a prisoner to this state, and therefore it lies with them to determine whether he shall be exchanged for Mr. Bedford. I am etc.<sup>24</sup>

24. The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

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Head-Quarters, April 30, 1778.

Sir: The extensive ill consequences arising from a want of uniformity in discipline and manœuvres throughout the Army, have long occasioned me to wish for the establishment of a well organised inspectorship, and the concurrence of Congress in the same views has induced me to set on foot a temporary institution, which from the success that has hitherto attended it, gives me the most flattering expectations, and will I hope obtain their approbation.

Baron de Steubens length of service in the first military School in Europe, [and his former rank] pointed him out as a person peculiarly qualified to be at the head of this department; this appeared the least exceptionable way of introducing him into the army and one that would give him the most ready opportunity of displaying his talents. I therefore proposed to him to undertake the office of Inspector General which he agreed to with the greatest cheerfulness, and has performed the duties of it with a zeal and intelligence equal to our wishes; he has two ranks of Inspectors under him, the lowest are officers charged with the inspection of brigades, with the title of brigade-inspectors; the others superintend several of these; they have written instructions relative to their several functions and the manœuvres which they are to practice are illustrated by a company which the Baron has taken the pains to train himself.<sup>40</sup>

The Brigade-Inspectors were chosen by the Brigadier and commanding Officers of Regiments in each brigade. The Inspectors are Lt. Colonels Barber of Jersey, Brooks of Massachusetts, Davis of Virginia and Mr. Ternant a french gentleman; the reason for employing him apart [from] his intrinsic merit and abilities, was his possessing the french and english languages equally, which made him a necessary assistant to the Baron de Steuben; he is content to serve without rank, until after an experiment of his abilities, Congress shall determine what he is entitled to.

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Upon the arrival of Lt. Colonel Fleury in camp, as he was unemployed, and had exercised the office of Aid-Major in France, the Baron proposed to have him employed as an Inspector in which I readily acquiesced, as Congress had given him the rank and pay of Lieut. Colonel;<sup>41</sup> there may be other foreign Officers in continental pay, idle for want of being attached to some corps, of whose services we might avail ourselves in this way, which is the only method of disposing of them, unless they could be formed into a distinct corps.<sup>42</sup>

From the extraordinary fatigue and close attention required of the Officers employed in the inspectorship, I did not think it amiss to let them entertain hopes that Congress would allow some addition to the pay which they derive from their rank; and I take the liberty of recommending the measure. I would propose twenty dollars per month for the brigade-inspectors, and thirty for the inspectors, in addition to their pay in the line.<sup>43</sup>

40. Ford prints the following extract from John Laurens's letter to his father, the President of Congress (Feb. 28, 1778), respecting Steuben: "I have had several long conversations with the Baron Steuben, who appears to me a man profound in the science of war, and well disposed to render his best services to the United States. In an interview between him and the general, at which I assisted in quality of interpreter, he declared that he had purposely waved making any contract with Congress, previous to his having made some acquaintance with the Commander in chief, in order that he might avoid giving offence to the officers of the army, and that the general might decide in what post he could be the most useful....I think he would be the properest man we could choose for the office of inspector general, and there are several good assistants that might be given him. I have the highest opinion of the service he would render in this line, as he seems to be perfectly aware of the disadvantages under which our army has labored from short enlistments and frequent changes; seems to understand what our subjects are capable of, and is not so staunch a systematist as to be averse from adapting established forms to stubborn circumstances. He will not give us the perfect instructions, absolutely speaking, but the



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best which we are in a condition to receive. We want some kind of general tutoring in this way so much, that as obnoxious as Conway is to most of the army, rather than take the field without the advantages that might be derived from a judicious exercise of his office, I would wish every motive of dissatisfaction respecting him for the present to be suppressed. The Baron proposes to take the rank of major general, with the pay, rations, &c. He does not wish for any actual command, as he is not acquainted with our language and the genius of our people.”

41. Washington wrote this phrase in the draft: “as Congress hath already bestowed on him the Rank and pay of Lt. Col.”

42. Washington wrote this phrase in the draft: “or form them into a distinct Corps.”

43. Washington wrote thus in the draft: “I think not less than 30 Dollars pr. Month to the Sub Inspectors and 20 to those of the Brigades will be sufft. Comn.”

I should do injustice if I were to be longer silent with regard to the merits of the baron de Steuben, his knowledge of his profession added to the zeal which he has discovered since he began upon the functions of his office, lead me to consider him as an acquisition to the service and to recommend him to the attention of Congress; his expectations with regard to rank extend to that of Major General, his finances he ingenuously confesses will not admit of his serving without the incident emoluments; and Congress I presume from his Character and their own knowledge of him, will without difficulty gratify him in these particulars.

The Baron is sensible that our situation requires a few variations in the duties of his office, from the general practice in Europe, and particularly that they must necessarily be more comprehensive; in which as well as in his instructions he has skilfully yielded to circumstances.

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The Success which has hitherto attended the plan, enables me to request with confidence the ratification of Congress, and is I think a pledge of the establishment of a well combined general System, which insurmountable obstacles have hitherto opposed. I have the honor to be, &c.<sup>44</sup>

44. In the writing of John Laurens; the draft, also by Laurens, is dated Apr. 28, 1778, and indorsed by him: "Copy to Congress 30th April." Washington, as noted, made several changes in Laurens's draft, which Laurens modified as above in the final signed letter sent to Congress.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 1, 1778.

Sir: I have had the honour to receive your dispatches of the 27th Inst.

In compliance with the request of Congress, I shall immediately call upon the Officers in the Army to take the Oath of Allegiance and Abjuration.<sup>45</sup> This I should have done, as soon as the Resolution passed, had it not been for the state of the Army at that time, and that there were some strong reasons which made it expedient to defer the matter.

My opinion upon the subject of a future provision for the Officers, hath been so fully and I trust, so necessarily and equitably urged, that I shall not add further respecting it, except my sincere wishes that the establishment was determined on. Nothing in my idea can be more just, and I am certain there is nothing more essential. The present unsettled state of the Army, is hurtful in the extreme.

Since my Letter of the 27th, I have received authentic information of the sailing of a very large number of transports from Philadelphia. Two hundred it is said. They went down the Delaware, the beginning of the Week, light and empty. I have not been able to learn any thing of their destination, nor can I form a conjecture upon the occasion, that is the least

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45. On Feb. 3, 1778, Congress resolved that all officers, military and civil, should take an oath of allegiance to the United States, the form of which will be found in the *Journals of the Continental Congress* of that date. This form is also to be found in the General Orders, May 7, 1778, q. v.

satisfactory.

With infinite pleasure, I beg leave to congratulate Congress on the very important and interesting advices brought by the Frigate L'Sensible. Genl. McDougall and Mr. Deane were so obliging as to transmit me the outlines of the good tidings.<sup>46</sup> As soon as Congress may think it expedient, I shall be happy to have an opportunity of announcing to the Army with the usual ceremony, such parts of the intelligence as may be proper and sanctified by authority. I have mentioned the matter to such Officers as I have seen, and I believe no event was ever received with a more heart felt joy. I have the honour, etc.

P.S. Just as I had finished my Letter above, I received the honour of your favor of the 28th, with the Resolutions and Packets alluded to.<sup>47</sup> I will take measures for dispersing the Printed Resolutions.<sup>48</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 1, 1778.

Sir: In compliance with your request, contained in your Letter of the 30th Ultio. I have delivered the Bundle of papers

46. Simeon Deane, brother to Silas Deane, was the bearer of the treaties of amity and commerce and of alliance between France and the United States. He came over in the French frigate *La Sensible*, arriving in Casco Bay April 13. He reached York, Pa., on Saturday, May 2. Congress had adjourned till Monday, but immediately convened, and

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the dispatches were read. The treaties were unanimously ratified by Congress on the afternoon of May 4.

47. On April 28 the President of Congress wrote to Washington: "The bearer hereof is charged with a packet containing 500 Copies of the Oath of Allegiance and Abjuration and he is directed to call on Mr. Bailey, printer at Lancaster for 200 Copies of the Act for granting pardons printed in the German tongue." This last was the packet alluded to in the P.S. to this letter.

48. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

respecting the loss of Tyconderoga &c. transmitted me some time ago, which I hope will get safe to hand.<sup>49</sup> I have &c.<sup>50</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 1, 1778.

Sir: I am honoured with yours of the 25th and 29th last Month. As I have never heard any thing from Genl. Heath respecting the exchange of Genl. Hamilton for Genl. Thompson since his letter of the 6th January, copy of which I transmitted to Mr. Peters<sup>51</sup> in mine of the 25th Janry, I concluded that the exchange could not be effected; but that no means may be left untried to regain so valuable an Officer as Genl. Thompson; I will again write to General Heath, and desire him to propose his exchange for either of the three Brigadiers at Cambridge. I have before mentioned my willingness to exchange the Officers under the Convention, for any of ours of equal rank, but I imagine this is made a matter of great favour by Genl Howe, as many urgent Letters to him on that subject, from the Conventionists, have passed thro' my hands. I have just now one from Lord Napier<sup>52</sup> a Lieut. in the 31st Regt.

The state of our Elaboratories contained in yours

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49. These were the papers sent to headquarters by the committee appointed by Congress to collect evidence, etc., on the loss of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. This letter of Washington's is indorsed by Charles Thomson: "read 4. The papers mentioned herein put into the hands of the comee. appointed to draw up the charges agst. Genl. Schuyler, Sinclair &c. as the pry. informs." This committee had been appointed on April 29 and consisted of Roger Sherman, William Henry Drayton, and Francis Dana.

50. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

51. Richard Peters, secretary of the Board of War.

52. Francis, Lord Napier, lieutenant in the Thirty-first Foot, British Army.

of the 29th is sufficiently alarming, but would be much more so if we had not every reason to expect from the late glorious news from Europe, that the Enemy will not be in a condition to operate against us early. I make no doubt but every thing has been done and will be done, to put matters in the best state of preparation. I am exceedingly glad to hear that so active a Man as Mr. Henry<sup>53</sup> is universally represented to be, has succeeded Butler in the Armourer's department, which had been long shamefully conducted. I do not think a moment's time is to be lost, in opening the lead mine upon Juniata.<sup>54</sup> If the dispute of property is between individuals, the public should, in my opinion, take the matter in hand, keep an account of the produce and pay it to him who shall in future appear to have the best title. The Iron cartridge Cannisters should be by all means carried on. They will upon an emergency serve instead of the Cartouch Box and will always carry spare ammunition perfectly secure from Rain, and save tin of which the former ones were made. I have the honour &c.<sup>55</sup>

## To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 3, 1778.

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Sir: In a late letter from General Schuyler, I received

53. William Henry, Superintendent of Armourers.

54. The Juniata River, in Pennsylvania.

55. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman; it is addressed to General Gates, as president of the Board of War.

the proceedings of a Board of Commissioners for Indian affairs, held at Albany the 15th of last month, [a copy of which has no doubt been transmitted to Congress.] It appears by them, and some other accounts, I have seen, that there is very little prospect of succeeding in the plan, for engaging a body of Indians from that quarter to serve with this army. The advantage, which the enemy possess over us, in having the means of making presents, much more liberally than we can, has made a strong impression upon their Minds, and seems to be more than a counterballance, for any arguments we can offer to conciliate their attachments. They also appear to be apprehensive for their own safety, and rather to wish for aid and protection from us, than willing to leave their habitations and come to our assistance.

The measure proposed was by way of experiment, as one, which might possibly be attended with valuable consequences; and if it could have been effected, without much difficulty, might have been worth a trial. But as the scheme does not well correspond with their present disposition and may serve to increase our embarrassments, in keeping them even in tolerable good humour, I am inclined to think it would be most advisable to relinquish the attempt. They may be told of what has happened in Europe, with proper embellishments, and that our affairs are now upon such a footing as to render their aid, in the field unnecessary, and that all we require of them is their friendship and good wishes. This and promises of

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protection may have a very powerful and happy effect.

It is of great importance to counteract the temptations held out by the enemy, and to secure the good will of the Indians, who appear at least to be in a state of hesitancy and indecision, if nothing worse. Congress, I am persuaded will do every thing in their power to promote these desireable ends. I have the honour etc.<sup>71</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 4, 1778.

Sir: Last Night at 11 O'Clock, I was honoured with your dispatches of the 3d. The Contents afford me the most sensible pleasure. Mr. Simeon Deane had informed me, by a line from Bethlehem, that he was the bearer of the Articles of alliance &c. between France and the States. I shall defer celebrating this happy event in a suitable manner, untill I have liberty from Congress to announce it publicly. I will only say, that the army are anxious to manifest their joy upon the occasion.

Inclosed you have a letter which I received a few days ago from Lord Stirling, and which, at his request,

<sup>71</sup>. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton, The bracketed phrase is in the draft but does not appear in the letter sent.

I lay before Congress with its contents.<sup>77</sup> I have the honor, etc.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, May 7, 1778.

Sir: Under cover with this you will receive a copy of a letter which I wrote the 23d January, and of two letters of recommendation delivered me by the Chevalier de la Neuville, which

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I transmit you at the request of that Gentleman; the original packet having, as he informs me, miscarried. I have the honour etc.<sup>87</sup>

### To THE BOARD OF WAR

Head Quarters, May 9, 1778.

Gentlemen: I have received your favor of the 6th instant, inclosing a Copy of a Letter from you to Capt. William Scull

77. Stirling's letter, dated May 1, 1778, is filed with that of Washington in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. The account of Stirling's losses in the service, dated April 30, Valley Forge, is also there filed. It was for horses, pistols, etc., lost at Long Island, Trenton, and Germantown.

"This day [May 4] His Excellency dined with G Nox and after dinner did us the honor to play at Wicket with us."— *Military Journal of George Ewing* (Yonkers: 1928. Privately printed.)

87. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

and a Resolution of Congress of the 13th April. The employment proposed for Capt. Scull will prevent his completing the Survey which I had directed him to make, and so far interfere with my views; but as he is in the Neighbourhood of the Country which you intend to have surveyed and the instructions have been already transmitted to him, I have not the least Objection to his proceeding in consequence of them.

There are at present but two Engineers in Camp besides General du Portail, and they are fully employed in constructing the necessary works of defence, so that I have no prospect of being able to furnish a geographical engineer, until Mr. Erskine who is at the



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head of that department and has been ordered on to Camp, shall arrive; whichever of his Assistants, shall be thought properly qualified, will attend the orders of the Board.

The Copies of the German Translation of a Resolution of Congress addressed to foreign Officers and soldiers in British pay, are come to hand. I have the honour etc.<sup>1</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 11, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty to transmit to Congress a copy of

1. The draft is in the writing of John Laurens.

a Letter from General Howe, which I received at three O'Clock this afternoon. The contents are exceedingly interesting to the unhappy prisoners in his hands. I thought it my duty to forward them immediately, and I must request that Congress will be pleased to inform me, as soon as possible, what line of conduct I am to pursue upon this occasion. The inclosed extract of a Letter from Genl. Smallwood, will shew the painful alternative to which the prisoners in Philadelphia will be reduced, unless they are relieved, and this is confirmed by intelligence thro' several other channels to myself. I shall wait directions in the matter, and govern myself by them, in my answer to General Howe.<sup>5</sup> I have the honour etc.

P.S. As to an equivalent in Men for Officers; That proposed by his Commissioners was too high. A more moderate one was nearly agreed to between them and the Gentlemen deputed by me when they were in Treaty. This mode of relief, at this instant, it may not be so necessary to adopt. There are probably Officers in General Burgoyne's army who are desirous of being exchanged, and if not, an equivalent may be fixed on hereafter as circumstances may point out.<sup>6</sup>

5. A copy of Howe's letter, dated May 10, 1778, is filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. It hints Howe's "apprehension of the sufferings of the

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unfortunate men in my possession during the approaching hot season, from the wants of those in yours, and from the disappointments I have experienced in sending supplies to them." He also stated that this was a final proposal. The extract of General Smallwood's letter (also filed as above) stated that the American soldiers, prisoners in Philadelphia, dreaded the return of the putrid fever and unless they could be exchanged, would be forced to enlist in the British Army to save their lives.

6. In the writing of John Walker. The letter was read in Congress on May 13 and referred to William Duer, R. H. Lee, and Charles Carroll. This committee reported on May 21. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, May 21, 1778.)

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 12, 1778.

Sir: I had the Honor to receive, in due time, your several favors of the 3d, 6th and 9th Inst., with the Papers to which they respectively alluded.

After much consideration upon the subject, I have appointed Genl McIntosh to command at Fort Pitt and in the Western Country for which he will set out, as soon as he can accomodate his affairs. I part with this Gentleman with much reluctance, as I esteem him an Officer of great worth and merit, and as I know his services here are and will be materially wanted. His firm disposition and equal justice; his assiduity and good understanding, added to his being a stranger to all parties in that Quarter, pointed him out as a proper Person, and I trust extensive advantages will be derived from his command, which I could wish was more agreeable. He will wait on Congress for their instructions.

As Lieut. Colo. Southerland,<sup>25</sup> Major Agnew<sup>26</sup> and Lieut. Poe,<sup>27</sup> have only requested to go to Europe on Parole, It does not appear to me, that I can with propriety apply to Genl. Howe for their exchange. This would imply that they were Prisoners of War. Tho' their exchange is certainly the most desirable mode of release, as it would relieve an

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equal number of our Officers from Captivity, yet I should be happy if a negotiation for the purpose should commence on their part.

25. Lieut. Col. Nicholas Sutherland, of the Forty-seventh Foot, British Army.

26. Maj. William Agnew, of the Twenty-fourth Foot, British Army.

27. Lieut. James Poe, of the Forty-seventh Foot, British Army.

Knowing that it would be our Interest to exchange all the Officers of General Burgoyne's Army if it could be done, I wrote Genl. Heath not long since, to take occasion to mention to them, that we should always be willing to accede to any equal propositions for that purpose, and would carefully convey their applications to Sir Wm. Howe or the Genl. who might command the British Army. I take the liberty to return their Letters, presuming that Congress may incline to give them some answer either directly or thro' Genl. Heath.

In respect to Lieut. Colo. Dirk,<sup>28</sup> I do not find that there is any necessity for granting the prayer of his Petition. We have already too many Officers, and I do not apprehend the interest of the States would be much promoted in his appointment. If he could make up two or three Companies, they would be of Prisoners and Deserters, who would most assuredly embrace an early opportunity to go off with their Arms and Cloathing. I am disposed to consider him as a man of some address and Policy, as he is aiming at a confirmation, in the line of the Army, by obtaining an appointment to a new Corps, of the rank which he had as a Division Qr. Master. Besides the impolicy of augmenting the number of Officers, where it is not really essential, such a promotion would give dissatisfaction, and I suppose there are few Officers if any, who formerly Commanded Mr. Dirk in the line of the Army, that would submit to his orders.

The inclosed Copy of a Letter from Genl. Dickenson to me, will inform Congress of the Fate of the Continental Frigates in

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28. Lieut. Col. Jacob Gerhard Diricks (Dirks). He had been a captain in the Fourth Continental Artillery, but had resigned in July, 1777. Congress granted him a brevet of lieutenant colonel by a resolve of Nov. 5, 1778. President Laurens, in a letter to Washington of May 9, called him Lieutenant Colonel Dirks.

Delaware; a fate in the situation they were left, I had long predicted and which I had taken much pains to avert, by using every argument in my power to have them sunk. In that case their destruction would have been, at least, a work of time, difficulty and expence; and might have been perhaps prevented. About One O'Clock on Thursday I got notice of an intended move of the Enemy by water, and conjecturing the destination of it, had a Detachment under Genl. Maxwell (whose tour of duty it was) ready to march towards the Delaware by 4 O'Clock, but a heavy rain prevented their moving till next Morning.

I have been happy in the exchange, and a visit from Lieut. Colo. Allen.<sup>29</sup> His fortitude and firmness seem to have placed him out of the reach of misfortune. There is an original something in him that commands admiration, and his long captivity and sufferings have only served to increase, if possible, his enthusiastic Zeal. He appears very desirous of rendering his services to the States and of being employed, and at the same time does not discover any ambition for high rank. Congress will herewith receive a Letter from him, and I doubt not they will make such provision for him, as they may think proper and suitable.

I take pleasure in transmitting a Philadelphia Paper of the 9th which came to hand yesterday evening, containing a message from his most Christian Majesty to the Court of London, in consequence of the Treaty between him and these States, and his Britannic Majesty's address to the Lords and Commons &c. The

29. Lieut. Col. Ethan Allen.

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Message is conceived in terms of irony and derision, more degrading to the pride and dignity of Britain, than any thing she has ever experienced since she was a Nation. It is not an actual declaration of War, but it certain must produce one. I have the honour &c.

P.S. A great number of blank Oaths will be wanted. You will be pleased to order some by every Opportunity.<sup>30</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Valley Forge, May 16, 1778.

Gentlemen: I have been honoured with your two favors of the 12th Instant.

If the provisions and stores, which are in the Southern States can be transported by water, it will without question be infinitely more eligible, than the present mode of conveyance, which is and must be attended with great delay and vast expence. The vessels to be employed in this business, I should suppose, ought to be small and such as could without difficulty, run into shallow water, or any port or inlet, in case of their being chased by the Enemy's ships or cruisers. From the opinion I entertain of

<sup>30</sup>. In the writing of Richard Kidder Meade.

Captain Robinson and the Board's desire to give him the chief direction of the craft, I should be exceedingly happy to obtain his release; however I cannot promise that it will soon take place. The moment I had notice of his detention, which General Howe communicated himself, I remonstrated against it and demanded that he should be liberated, but without any effect. I will urge it a second time. Captain Robinsons permitting a Captain Galt to attend the flag, in the character of a private, was the foundation of this unhappy affair. I am persuaded he had no ill design in the matter and that it proceeded intirely from an imprudent and unreasonable curiosity in Galt to see his Philadelphia acquaintances. The proceeding, considering the great delicacy of Truces, was not

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justifiable. I do not conceive, that any proposition for his exchange can be made with propriety. He is not to be viewed in the light of a prisoner of war, If his seizure was illegal, he ought to be restored without our giving any compensation; if it was not, we cannot claim his release. To propose an exchange, would be to give up the point and to admit there was a degree of criminality in his conduct. Supposing for a moment, that he could be considered as a prisoner, I dont know that we have an Officer of his rank to offer for him.

While we are on the subject of transportation of provisions and Stores, I would take the liberty to suggest, that great advantages in my opinion, would be derived to the public from the establishment of stages at proper distances, for instance forty or fifty miles apart, on the Land communication between

this and the principal Towns in the Eastern States, from which we generally procure supplies. For want of this, Stores are a long time getting to hand, and in many cases, I am satisfied, they have been stopped (sometimes thro' whim and sometimes thro' accident) dispersed, and in the end intirely lost. If stages and depositories were fixed on, the conveyance would be more certain and more expeditious. Magazines of forage might be collected, where they are established, for the cattle used in the business, and there would be no difficulty in procuring teams. As matters now stand, the owners from the great distance they go the uncertainty of their returning on the one hand and on the other the certainty of their being much injured if they do, are unwilling to hire them and very frequently refuse it altogether, by which means the Publick measures are greatly impeded and very essentially detrimented.

The inconvenience which the Board mention in the case of discharg'd Soldiers, has frequently happen'd, and however easy it may appear to guard against it, it will be found in practice and on a more minute investigation of the matter tolerably difficult. If those sent to Hospitals should not receive their back pay, and that which becomes due while they are there, it is said they would want many comfortable necessaries which by having it they could procure, in aid of the Hospital Supplies. Another difficulty is, their pay is frequently

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comprehended in the Abstracts for three or four Months back previous to their being sent away, and Warrants

granted for it, which remain unpaid for want of money in the Military Chest. When this is the case, their pay might be drawn twice; once by the Pay Master on the General Regimental Warrant and by themselves on the Director or Surgeons Certificate. Nor can the Pay Masters when they receive money on the Abstracts give credit for the sum due the Sick as the warrants are always fix'd and drawn for the whole Account of the Abstract, when it was first presented. I will try with the Resolution and some Orders fram'd for the purpose to provide against the grievance. The former or one very like it was communicated to the Army in 1776.

I am much obliged by the information of the Board of War respecting Soldiers who leave Camp as Servants to Officers. Orders shall be immediately issued to restrain the abuse, and once for all I beg to add, that I shall always receive with great pleasure intelligence from the Board, of any practices failing under their notice which require reform. I have the honour etc.<sup>58</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 18, 1778.

Sir: I have been honored with your two favors of the 11th and 15th Instant, with the several papers alluded to; the

58. The draft is partially in the writing of Caleb Gibbs.

former by Monsr. Jemat,<sup>84</sup> the latter by Express yesterday.

Colo. Johnson<sup>85</sup> set out on Saturday afternoon to wait on Congress upon the subject of his late appointment, and I presume will be at York to day.

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I shall announce the Resolution of the 15th to the Army,<sup>86</sup> and would flatter myself, it will quiet in a great measure, the uneasinesses which have been so extremely distressing, and prevent resignations which had proceeded and were likely to be at such a height, as to destroy our whole military system. It has experienced no inconsiderable shock, particularly in the line of some States, from the loss of Several very valuable Officers.

The Letter and Brevet for Colo. Allen<sup>87</sup> I will transmit, by the first opportunity. He left Camp Eight days ago.

From a variety of concurring circumstances and the uniform report of persons, who have left Philadelphia within four days past, it would appear that the Enemy mean to evacuate the City. It is said, they have already embarked a part of their Heavy cannon and baggage; That transports are fitted and fitting for their Horse, and taking in Hay. The accounts further add, that there has been a press for some nights in the City, and several Men obtained in this way and carried aboard Ship; also that there has been an increased number of Vendues. These circumstances all indicate an evacuation, but I have not been able to learn the objects of their future operations. I wrote to General Gates yesterday upon the subject, that

84. Lieutenant Colonel De Gimat (Jimat), aide to Lafayette.

85. Col. Francis Johnston, of the Fifth Pennsylvania Regiment. He had been appointed Commissary General of Prisoners of the Continental Army to succeed Elias Boudinot, but declined. Congress gave him leave to decline on May 23.

86. The half-pay resolves.

87. Ethan Allen. He was breveted colonel in the Continental Army; became major general of Vermont Militia in 1779.



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he may be prepared in the best manner the situation of things will admit, in case they should be destined for the North River, and desired him to retain for the present all the Eastern recruits, intended for this Army. The Quarter Master General and Commissary of Provisions are directed to use every possible exertion for putting the affairs of their departments in a train to facilitate a movement in case it should be necessary; but such have been the derangements and disorders in them, that we must be greatly embarrassed for a considerable time yet. A valuable detachment under the Command of the Marquis Fayette marched this morning, which is intended to move between the Delaware and Schuylkill, for restraining the Enemy's parties, procuring intelligence and to act as circumstances may require.

I cannot help feeling for the prisoners in possession of the Enemy. If they evacuate Philadelphia, these unhappy men will be dragged away with them, and perhaps into a more miserable confinement; but supposing that their future treatment should not be worse, or even that it should be more comfortable than their past, the idea of being removed farther from their friends, and farther from relief, must distress them to the last degree. I have &ca.

P.S. I would take the liberty to mention, that I think the Arms and Cloathing expected from France, should be brought forward without a moments delay after they arrive. The impolicy of

suffering them ever to remain in places accessible to shipping, out of the question, Our distress for both is amazingly great. We have many men now without Firelocks, and many coming in, in the same predicament; and Half the Army are without Shirts. Our condition for want of the latter and Blankets is quite painful, of the former very distressing. The Doctors attribute in a great degree the loss of Hundreds of lives to the scarcity of cloathing, and I am certain Hundreds have deserted from the same cause.<sup>88</sup>

## To THE BOARD OF WAR

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Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 18, 1778.

Sir: I am favd. with yours of the 13th. on the subject of the Militia, which have been stationed at Easton, Bethlehem and Reading. The matter is new to me, as I do not recollect ever to have ordered a man of them to either of the above places. Colo. Nichola's Invalids<sup>89</sup> have been at Easton and Bethlehem, where they were kept as a guard to the Hospitals and Stores, and therefore Militia were not necessary there, as Reading was the principal depository of our Quarter Master Stores, a guard was necessary, but I should have supposed far short of 200 would have been sufficient. When I drew Lt. Colo. Smith's detachment

88. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

89. Col. Lewis Nicola's Invalid Regiment.

of Continental Troops from Lancaster, I desired Governor Wharton to furnish a guard of Militia in their place, as I was informed there were considerable stores there, but they were to be considered as part of the number of 1000 Men, which General Armstrong stipulated should be kept up during the Winter, to cover the Country between Schuylkill and Delaware This stipulation was never complied with, there being sometimes not more than 50 Men with Genl Lacey and never more than two or three hundred at a time. In my opinion, the Militia at Easton and Bethlehem, if they yet remain there, are totally useless. A small guard will be necessary at Reading, over the Quarter Master Stores. If I had given orders to mount these Guards, I would have countermanded them, but as I did not, the Board had better take proper measures. As you say the Manner of procuring this Body of Militia was a little extraordinary I conclude it must have been somewhat irregular, and therefore should be glad to have your meaning more fully explained. The Rations consumed at the out posts, are, as you observe, monstrous and extravagant and therefore every method should be pursued to find out the useless mouths and dismiss them. I am etc.<sup>90</sup>

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90. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman. It was addressed to Richard Peters, as secretary of the board.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 21, 1778.

Sir: General McIntosh will have the honor to deliver you this. He is now on his way to take the command at Pittsburg and in the Western frontiers, and waits on Congress for their instructions.

I would also take the liberty of submitting to Congress, the inclosed account of Expences incurred by the General in his Journey from Georgia to join this Army, and which he presented to me and to the Auditors for payment. I did not know how far I might be authorised to comply with his request, and therefore lay the matter before Congress. At the same time I would observe, that nothing appears to me more equitable, than that claims of this sort, where they are not immoderate, should be satisfied by the public. If this were not the case, the expences of an Officer when ordered from one post to another, especially where they are distant, would sink the whole or a very large part of his pay. The charges attending the General's journey from hence to Pittsburg will require equal attention, and the whole I am persuaded will meet with a just and suitable provision. I have the honour, etc.<sup>22</sup>

22. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 23, 1778.

Dear Sir: I have been favd. with yours of the 19th with its inclosures on the subject of the Indian ravages upon the Western Frontier. Previous to the Receipt of it, I had put that part

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of the 13th Virginia Regt. which remained here under marching orders, with an intent of sending them to Fort Pitt, as they were raised in that Country. Immediately upon receiving the account of the alarming situation of the Frontier inhabitants from you, I ordered the 8th Pennsylvania Regt. to march. They were also raised to the Westward and are a choice Body of Men about one hundred of them have been constantly in Morgans Rifle Corps. These two Regiments will march full the number of 250 Men from hence. There are upwards of one hundred of the 13th Virginia now at and near Fort Pitt, and many deserters belonging to both will come in, when they find their Regiments are to do duty in that Country. As Colo. Russell of the 13th Virginia Regiment is already at Fort Pitt and Colo. Brodhead commands and goes up with the 8th Pennsylvania, it was impossible to give the command of the detachment to Lieut. Colo. Butler. Indeed he does not seem to wish to go upon the expedition, as he says his influence is not so great among the Inhabitants of the back Country as the Board imagine. From his knowledge of the Indian Country, their language and manners, he certainly would be very useful and I shall therefore either send him or

Colo. John Gibson up, who I am informed can render equal service. I can very lily spare the Troops which I have sent, especially the 8th Pennsylvania Regt. which composed the greatest part of Morgans Corps, as the Draughts and Recruits from the different States, not only fall short of the stipulated numbers, but come in extremely slow. if Colo. John Gibson goes up, he will take the Command of the 13th Virginia Regiment pro tempore, and Colo. Russell will come down to Gibson's. There is a dispute subsisting between Colo. Russell and Colo. William Crawford for the 13th. Virginia Regiment, and I do not mean, that this temporary appointment of Colo. Gibson, to the command of it, should prejudice Colo. Crawfords claim, should he incline to prosecute it hereafter. If the two Regiments to be raised upon the Frontiers are not disposed of, I would recommend Colo. Crawford to the command of one of them. I know him to be a brave and active officer and of considerable influence upon the Western Frontier of Virginia. I am &ca.45

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 24, 1778.

Sir: I was duly honoured with your two favors of the 20th and 21st Instant, with their Inclosures.

45. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

I have transmitted General Howe a Copy of the Resolution of the 21st. respecting prisoners, and supposing him willing to effect an Exchange immediately, I have written to Mr. Boudinot and requested him, as he is in possession of all the papers concerning them, to come to Camp without delay and superintend the business on our part.

The Provost establishment is a necessary one, and the Corps shall be formed as soon as proper Officers can be fixed on.

On the night of the 19th the Enemy moved out in force, against the Detachment under the Marquis Fayette, mentioned in my Letter of the 18th, which made a timely and handsome retreat in great order over the Schuylkill at Matsons ford. Our loss was nine men in the whole. The Enemy's supposed something more. Their march was circuitous and rapid, and I should imagine many of their Men suffered from it. Genl. Clinton it is said, commanded in person.<sup>49</sup>

The accounts from Philadelphia are still in favor of an evacuation; It is certain that a great deal of baggage is on Ship board, and that they still seem busy in packing up. There are other reports which say, that it is only a Detachment which is going, and that the West Indies is conjectured to be the place of their destination.

I beg leave to lay before Congress a Memorial and Remonstrance of the Field Officers of the North Carolina [brigade],<sup>50</sup> founded on the suspension and dismissal of Captain John

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Vance<sup>51</sup> of the Artillery thro' the means of the House of Commons of that State. It is with reluctance that I

49. Sir William Howe commanded the main detachment, while the enveloping troops were commanded by Lieut. Gen. Francis Grant and Maj. Gen. Charles Grey.

50. The memorial of the field officers of North Carolina was referred to a committee of Congress. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, May 27. 1778.)

51. Capt. John Carlow Vance, of the North Carolina State Artillery. He was taken prisoner at Charleston, S. C., in May, 1780; exchanged in June, 1781.

Interfere with the decisions of any civil or Legislative body; However, I cannot help thinking that the proceedings respecting Captn. Vance, are of an extraordinary nature and such as involve consequences, which may deeply effect and Interest the rights of every Officer or at least all under the rank of Brigadiers. I should suppose no Individual State can or ought to deprive an Officer of rank, derived from the States at large; and that it will not be improper for Congress to prohibit the exercise of such a power. I do not know myself what the merits or demerits of Captain Vance are (the memorial speaks very favourably of him) nor do I apprehend they can make a part of the question. The principle and practice are what I cannot reconcile to my ideas of propriety. Congress I am persuaded will give the Memorial that attention, which the Objects of it seem to deserve, and I have only to refer them to the Journals of the House, which contain the whole of the proceedings against Captain Vance, that have come to my knowledge. They will be found in pages 6, 10, 14 and 18. I have the Honour etc.<sup>52</sup>

## To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Valley Forge, May 28, 1778.

## Library of Congress

Sir: Since I had the Honor of addressing you on the 24th Inst., nothing material has happened. The Enemy are still in Philadelphia, but the intelligence from thence is so clear and so strong, that it is certain, or nearly as much so as any Event can be that is contingent, that they mean to abandon it. Against the various measures they are pursuing, which point to an evacuation, there is but one single circumstance opposed, that I can learn, which is; that they are working at their Redoubts with great industry; but this fact, tho' certainly true, cannot be of sufficient weight to raise a doubt upon the subject, and must be considered, as merely calculated to deceive and mask their design. We cannot find out, Notwithstanding the most diligent pains, whether their movement will be by Land or Sea; Nor are the Inhabitants of the Town satisfied on the point. Appearances favor either. They have a great many Ships and very large; Yet from the preparation of boats at Prince's Bay on the South side of Staten Island, which I am just advised of, and for some other reasons a Land rout is not improbable. I have detached to Jersey the whole of the Troops of that State under General Maxwell, which I flatter myself with the Militia General Dickinson will be able to collect, will give them some annoyance in case they attempt a retreat by Land. I have the honour, etc.<sup>1</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 28, 1778.

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52. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

1. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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## Library of Congress

circumstance opposed, that I can learn, which is; that they are working at their Redoubts with great industry; but this fact, tho' certainly true, cannot be of sufficient weight to raise a doubt upon the subject, and must be considered, as merely calculated to deceive and mask their design. We cannot find out, Notwithstanding the most diligent pains, whether their movement will be by Land or Sea; Nor are the Inhabitants of the Town satisfied on the point. Appearances favor either. They have a great many Ships and very large; Yet from the preparation of boats at Prince's Bay on the South side of Staten Island, which I am just advised of, and for some other reasons a Land rout is not improbable. I have detached to Jersey the whole of the Troops of that State under General Maxwell, which I flatter myself with the Militia General Dickinson will be able to collect, will give them some annoyance in case they attempt a retreat by Land. I have the honour, etc.<sup>2</sup>

2. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, May 28, 1778.

Sir: Lieut. Colo. Jno. Gibson<sup>3</sup> of the 6th Virginia Regiment, who, from the knowledge of the Western Country and Indian Nations and language, is ordered to repair to Pittsburg will have the honor of delivering you this; he is intitled and has been ever since the Twenty fifth of October last to a Regiment in that line, and I must take the liberty to request that Congress will give him a Commission of that date. The Resolution of the 31st of December "recommending the States to suspend filling up Regimental vacancies," my expectations that some Officers of inferior rank and perhaps of the same, belonging to Other States, might be reduced upon a New arrangement, and certainly if I gave Commissions in one instance, I should be obliged to do it in all, have prevented me appointing him to the vacancy he had a right to. I do not know particularly to what Regiment he ought to be appointed, Congress therefore will be pleased to give him a Commission for a Regiment from the State of Virginia, without mentioning the Number. I have the honour etc.



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P.S. Many Copies of Oath's are still wanted.

3. Gibson's commission as colonel gave him rank from Oct. 25, 1777. He was transferred to the Ninth Virginia Regiment in September, 1778; to the Seventh Virginia Regiment in February, 1781; retired in January, 1783.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, May 31, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor to receive your favor of the 25th Inst. by Doctor Scudder,<sup>47</sup> and that of the 29th yesterday afternoon, with the inclosures and packet to which they referred.

I shall inform Major Lee<sup>48</sup> of the New arrangement of his corps, and will appoint the officers required.

Major Beatty<sup>49</sup> is not in camp. The letter addressed to him shall be sent by the first Opportunity to Princeton, where I presume he will be found. That for Capt. Smith<sup>50</sup> is already dispatched to him.

The Enemy are yet in Philadelphia, tho' the whole chain of information for several days past afforded grounds to believe that they would have evacuated it before now. I should suppose they are nearly prepared to do it, tho' the removal of the stores and baggage of so large an army requires considerable time.

June 1.

I should be glad to know, in case Philadelphia is evacuated, whether any and what line of conduct is to be pursued respecting the goods that may be left. Such articles as come under the denomination of public stores will, of course, be taken by the proper officers for the use of the States. The point on which I wish direction, is with respect to goods and Merchandize, private property.

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47. Dr. Nathaniel Scudder, a Delegate to Congress from New Jersey.

48. Maj. Henry ("Light Horse Harry") Lee.

49. Maj. John Beatty. of the Sixth Pennsylvania Regiment. He was made colonel and Commissary General of Prisoners on May 28; resigned in March, 1780.

50. Capt. Robert Smith, of Malcolm's Additional Continental regiment. He declined the appointment of Secretary to the Board of War; was wounded at Monmouth, N.J., June 28; did not rejoin his regiment.

I do not know whether any considerable quantity may be left; but it has been suggested, that from an expectation of the sort, there are some bringing into light their gold and silver for the purpose of buying up. If there should be Cloathing &c. suitable for the army, perhaps there might be nothing unjust in the public's taking the preference; and Congress appointing one or two, intelligent, active persons of address dress, acquainted with the City, and with those who have the goods, with proper powers to purchase them. Whatever measure may be thought expedient, it will be necessary to adopt it as early as possible, as the evacuation will probably take place in a short time. Robt. Morris Esqr., I should imagine, if the purchasing scheme is determined on, will be able to point out proper persons. Some Gentlemen have mentioned Messrs. Samuel Howel and Thomas Franklyn as well qualified, both on account of their integrity and attachment to our cause, as from their knowledge of the City and residence in it, ever since the enemy had the possession. I have the honour etc.

P.S. I was just now honoured with your Letter of the 31st Ult<sup>o</sup>.<sup>51</sup>

51. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on June 2 and referred to Thomas McKean, John Witherspoon, and James Smith.

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, June 2, 1778.

Sir: I beg leave to inform you, that agreeable to the Resolutions transmitted in your Favor of the 31st Ult<sup>o</sup>., I shall undertake the reform of the North Carolina Batallions in Camp, as soon as circumstances will admit.

I sincerely wish the Legislatures of the several States had passed Laws, adopting the generous policy, recommended by Congress in their Resolution of the 23d of April. I am assured by authority not to be questioned, that for want of this, Hundreds, nay Thousands of people, and among them valuable Artisans, with large quantities of Goods will be forced from Philadelphia, who otherwise would willingly remain. From report, their reluctance and distress upon this occasion, are scarcely to be paralleled. There are a few, whose conduct have been such, that no assurances of security, I presume, could induce them to stay; and their departure compelled and founded as it were in the approbation of their own consciences, would answer all the purposes of example, especially if followed by a confiscation of property. A proscribing system or Laws having the same effect, when carried to a great extent, ever appeared to me to be impolitic; and their operation should always cease with the causes, which produced them. Examples in terrorem are necessary, but to exile many of its Inhabitants

cannot be the interest of any State. I have the honor, etc.<sup>7</sup>

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Valley Forge, June 4, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty to transmit you by Express, the inclosed packet, which just arrived at our advanced Post by a flag from Sir Henry Clinton. I also transmit a Copy of a Letter I received from him of the 30th Ult<sup>o</sup>., and of my answer; likewise Copies of his and Lord

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Howes Letters, which came to hand by the present flag. The packet I presume, contains Acts similar to those sent to me.<sup>24</sup> I have the honour etc.<sup>25</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, June 6, 1778.

Gentn.: I have lately received 1900 Stand of Arms from

7. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

24. The inclosures were copies of letters to Washington from Clinton and Howe and printed copies of the Conciliatory Acts of Parliament.

25. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on June 6.

the Eastward, which will nearly, if not quite compleat the number of Men who are at present in want. But we are exceedingly distressed for Cartouch Boxes. By an exact return made a few days ago 1700 were wanting for the new Recruits, and to replace the old ones, worn out in the last Campaign. Since this a number of Recruits from New York and Maryland have arrived. The Deputy Commissary of Stores informs me, that Lebanon will furnish about 150 pr. week. The supply from that quarter will be so slow that we must not put any dependence upon it. I do not know what quantity has been made at Springfield, but Genl Knox inform'd me, that the manufactory there would be considerable; I shall be much obliged by your dispatching an Express to that place, with orders to send forward what are ready, with the utmost dispatch. In the mean time, if you have a number of the thin Iron Cannisters finished, be pleased to have them sent down, as they will serve as a substitute for leather Boxes. I am, etc.<sup>47</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, June 7, 1778.

## Library of Congress

Sir: I have been duly honoured with your Favors of the 4th and 5th Inst. and with the Resolutions and papers to which they refer.

47. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.

I have taken measures to communicate the New Establishment of the Army thro' the Line, and the sooner the arrangements can be made the better. Should there appear further regulations necessary I shall take the liberty to offer my Sentiments respecting them.

My principal design in addressing you, so soon after the receipt of your Letters, is to advise Congress of the arrival of the Commissioners. Lord Carlisle, Governor Johnston and William Eden Esquire are come over in this character and got to Philadelphia yesterday. Lord Cornwallis is arrived also.

I have been just favoured with the inclosed British paper which I transmit for your perusal. Some parts of it are very interesting.

By some accident, the Copies of the Resolutions of the 10th of January,<sup>52</sup> referred to in that of the 4th Inst., have been mislaid or lost. This circumstance lays me under the necessity of troubling you with a request for Others. I have the honour etc.

P.S. I am told, a Resolution passed about the 19th Ult. respecting the payment of Prisoners, either in the actual possession of the Enemy or on parole.<sup>53</sup> I do not recollect to have been honoured with it, and if there is such a One, I wish to be favoured with a Copy for the government of my conduct.<sup>54</sup>

52. Appointing three members of the Congress and three members of the Board War to repair to camp and execute a plan, in concert with the Commander in Chief, for reducing the number of Continental battalions, removing civil officers, settling rank disputes, etc.

53. The resolve of May 19 provided for pay and rations to the officers who were prisoners.

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54. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on June 9 and referred to Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, and Henry Marchant.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, June 9, 1778.

Dear Sir: I was favoured with yours of the 6th Inst. inclosing copies of your answers to Lord Howe and General Clinton. The originals I sent in early this morning by a flag.

I have the honor to transmit you a duplicate of a letter I received from Sir Henry Clinton for the purpose of procuring a passport for Doctor Ferguson<sup>68</sup> (the secretary to the Kings Commission) to Congress, with my answer to him; on the subject of which Congress will be pleased to favor me with their instructions. I have the honour, etc.<sup>69</sup>

### **To FRANCIS DANA**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, June 9, 1778.

Dr. Sir: I was favoured with a Resolution of Congress of the 4th Inst. by which you are appointed to assist in the arranging of the Army. As so important a matter ought not to be delayed, I would be glad to see you at Camp, as soon as possible; and to know

68. Dr. Adam Ferguson. The passport was refused.

69. In the writing of James McHenry.

when I can have that pleasure. I am, etc.<sup>67</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, June 10, 1778.

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Sir: Major Campbell<sup>73</sup> of the 13th. Virginia Regiment will have the Honor of presenting you this. He is now on his way, at the earnest solicitation of General McIntosh to serve in the Western department and waits on Congress to obtain, if they shall think proper, a Commission for a Lieutenant Colonelcy in the Virginia Line, to which he has been intitled in the ordinary course since the 20th of February last. The Major sustains the Character of a good and brave Officer and has behaved as such during his service. He is the more desirous of getting a Commission at this time, as otherwise he may be commanded by the Lieutenant Colonels to be, or who are appointed to the two new Regiments, lately ordered to be raised in that Quarter. I do not know the particular Regiment to which he should be affixed, therefore, if he obtains a Commission, it may be left blank in this instance. I have the Honor, etc.

[P.S.] There are elder Majors in the Virginia line than Major Campbell.<sup>74</sup>

67. Contemporary copy in an unknown hand.

73. Maj. Richard Campbell. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel, to date from Feb. 20, 1778; wounded at Camden, S. C, in April, 1781; killed at Eutaw Springs, S.C., in September, 1781.

74. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, June 11, 1778.

Sir: The Letters, which I have the Honor to transmit you by this conveyance, were sent by a flag last night to our advanced post at Radnor, and from thence to Head Quarters this Morning.<sup>81</sup> I have the honour etc.<sup>82</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

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Head Quarters, June 15, 1778.

Sir: I have been duly honoured with your favours of the 11th and 14th Inst., and with the inclosures to which they refer.

The Resolution for settling the value of Rations which have become due since the 1st of January and fixing the mode of payment, I shall announce in this days orders,<sup>18</sup> and hope it will be highly satisfactory to all who are interested in it.

I have notified Genl Mifflin of the inquiry directed by Congress on the 11th Inst., by transmitting him a copy of their proceedings;<sup>19</sup> and he has obtained leave, on his solicitation, to repair

81. On June 14 Henry Laurens wrote to Washington as follows: "Between one and two o'Clock yesterday the Packet which your Excellency sent to Congress accompanied by Your Excellency's favor of the 11th was bro't into the House, among other Papers it contained an Address from the British Commissioners to Congress, at that minute Congress were determining on a proper reply to be given to Sir H. Clinton's application for a Passport for Doctor Ferguson, I was ordered to read the Address, when I had advanced to the second page, the House directed me to Seal up all the Papers and adjourned to Monday Morning." Laurens's letter is in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

82. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

18. See General Orders of June 16, 1778, *post*.

19. On June 15 Washington wrote to Mifflin: "Inclosed you will receive a Copy of a Resolution of Congress of the 11th Inst. which came to hand on Saturday Evening." The resolve of June 11 directed Washington to order an inquiry into the conduct of Mifflin, as late Quartermaster General, for responsibility for the deficiencies and distresses of the army and, if justified, to order a court-martial upon the delinquents.



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to York &c in order to prepare for his defence. This I thought myself under a necessity of granting, however inconvenient and injurious it may be, to permit the absence of Officers at this period.

Our expectations that Philadelphia will be evacuated in the course of a few days, are again up. The information received yesterday, thro' various channels and in a pretty direct way, would seem to place the matter, almost, on the footing of certainty.

We had about Forty privates and Twenty seaman exchanged on Sunday. Another party will be exchanged to day and according to agreement, the whole of our unfortunate men will be released, as fast as we can bring down parties of the Prisoners in our hands to give for them. It is thought by some, we shall not have an opportunity of compleating the exchange of All those in Philadelphia before the Enemy leave it. Mr. Boudinot has also adjusted and settled and adjusted the whole number of Prisoners we are to account for, besides those now in actual confinement at Nine Hundred, which is less than half of the claim Sir Wm. Howe so pertinaciously and so long adhered to. I have the Honor etc.<sup>20</sup>

20. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. It is indorsed by Thomson as "read 18th. referred to the board of war who are directed to report to Congress the grounds and terms upon which the exchange of prisoners between genl. Washington and genl. Clinton has taken place."

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, June 15, 1778.

Dear Sir: I am favd. with yours of the 9th instant. I have directed the Blankets to be brought forward to Camp, after the North Carolinians are supplied, the remainder shall be distributed among the troops who most want.<sup>21</sup>

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The draughts from the Army, for Teamsters, Mechanics and persons of different occupations are so great, that our return, upon command, amounts to almost half the effective fit for duty.<sup>22</sup> And what is worse, they scarce ever come back. At the Rate Capt. Coren<sup>23</sup> is going on, he will soon make up as many Cannisters, as will supply the want of Cartouche Boxes, and for that, and the reasons I have just given, I have not ordered any Workmen from the Army. I am &ca.<sup>24</sup>

### To DANIEL ROBERDEAU

Head Quarters, June 15, 1778.

Sir: I was favoured with your letter of the fourth Inst. The number of applications for manufacturers and artificers

21. At this point the draft has the following crossed out: "I wish I could, without reducing the Regiments, already small, to mere Companies, furnish you with workmen for making Cannisters; But"

22. At this point the draft has the following crossed out: "I have endeavoured to strengthen the Army as much as possible by drawing in all the soldiers who were employed as waiters upon officers not in the line, and the Qr. Mr. General is hiring teamsters at an immense price in."

23. Capt. Isaac Coren, of Flower's Artillery Artificers. He was cashiered in June, 1778.

24. The draft, in the writing of Tench Tilghman, is addressed to Col. Timothy Pickering, as president of the Board of War.

of different kinds could they all be complied with, would be a considerable loss to the army.

But as the establishing the smelting of lead is of very great importance, I have directed Serjeant Harris to repair to you at York Town; and this day given general orders for an

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inquiry to discover if two others, who understand the business can be found in camp. If there are any such, I shall have them sent to you. With great respect, I am etc.<sup>25</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, June 18, 1778.

Sir: The Baron Steuben will have the Honor of delivering you this. I do not know particularly the extent of his business at York, but from what he has communicated, it is in part to get the duties and powers of his appointment minutely defined and settled. I inclose a Copy of orders on the 15th Inst., which were issued to quiet the minds of the General Officers and to remove a spirit of jealousy, which but too apparently was rising among them. These contain my ideas of the principal duties of the Inspectors office, and I have reason to think are generally agreeable to the Army. While I am on this subject, I must do  
25. The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.

justice to the Baron's intelligence, zeal and indefatigable industry, from which we have experienced very happy effects.

The inclosed Letter, I transmit at the request of Captain Gibbs,<sup>48</sup> and I wish to recommend him to the consideration of Congress. He has been in the Army from the commencement of the War, and in the capacities, which he mentions. When Congress were pleased to honor me with the appointment of Officers for the Sixteen additional Battallions, I offered to make some provision for him, but this he declined; preferring to remain in my family. The Guard he commanded originally consisted of Fifty men, but since the arrival of Baron Steuben it has been augmented to a Hundred and fifty. He advised that there should be a select Corps of this number to receive the manœuvres in the first instance, and to act as a Model to the Army; and proposed that it should be formed of the Old Company and Drafts from the Line. I presume, if it should be Congress's pleasure, that a Majority would be highly agreeable to the Captain; and is as much as he expects. I have the honor, etc.<sup>49</sup>

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, ½ after 11 A.M., June 18, 1778.

Sir: I have the pleasure to inform Congress, that I was

48. Capt. Caleb Gibbs, of the Commander in Chief's Guard. He was promoted to major July 29, 1778; transferred to the Second Massachusetts Regiment Jan. 1, 1781; wounded at Yorktown, Va.; retained in Jackson's Additional Continental regiment in November, 1783; brevet lieutenant colonel in September, 1783.

49. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

this minute advised by Mr. Roberts, that the Enemy evacuated the City early this morning. He was down at the Middle ferry on this side, where he received the intelligence from a number of the Citizens who were on the opposite shore. They told him, that about Three Thousand of the Troops had embarked on board Transports. The destruction of the Bridge prevented him crossing. I expect every moment Official accounts on the subject. I have put Six Brigades in motion, and the rest of the Army are preparing to follow with all possible dispatch.<sup>50</sup> We shall proceed towards Jersey and govern ourselves according to circumstances. As yet I am not fully ascertained of the Enemy's destination, nor are there wanting a variety of Opinions as to the route they will pursue, whether it will be by Land or Sea, admitting it to be New York. Some think it probable in such case, that the part of their Army, which has crossed the Delaware, will march down the Jersey shore some distance and then embark. There is other intelligence corroborating Mr. Robert's, but none Official is yet come. I have the Honor, etc.

P.S. A Letter from Capt. McClean<sup>51</sup> dated in Philadelphia, this minute came to hand confirming the evacuation.<sup>52</sup>

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50. To this point precisely the same words were written to Vice President George Bryan, of Pennsylvania.

51. Capt. Allen McLane, of Patton's Additional Continental regiment.

52. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. Read in Congress on June 20 and referred to the Committee of Intelligence, which, apparently, published as much of the letter as the part sent to Vice President Bryan and added the postscript, as these portions of the letter have been underscored by the Congress.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, 6 o'Clock P.M., June 18, 1778.

Sir: Since I had the Honor of addressing you this forenoon. I received your Letter of the 17th with its several Inclosures.

I am happy in the approbation of Congress respecting my conduct to Doctor Ferguson. I could not find, after the maturest consideration on the subject, that his passage thro' the Country would be in any wise material, or answer any other purpose than to spread disaffection.<sup>53</sup>

I shall take every measure in my power to prevent an intercourse between the Army and the Enemy, and also between the Inhabitants and the latter. You may rest assured, that whatever Letters come from their lines shall be, as they ever have been, minutely inspected; and wherever they import any thing of an insidious cast, they shall be suppressed. In this, I trust, I shall offend not against any rule or right, nor the strictest propriety.

The Letter for the Commissioners, I shall transmit by the earliest opportunity; However their departure from Philadelphia will prevent their getting it as soon as they otherwise

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would have done. I cannot say, that I regret the delay; for there is no knowing, to what acts of depredation and ruin, their disappointed ambition might have led. And permit me to add, that I think there was no other criterion for Congress to

53. At this point the draft has deleted: "which appears evidently to be a capital Object with the Commissioners and their Sovereign, Under this persuasion I refused the passport."

go by, than the one they have adopted. The proceedings of the 22d of April, it is probable, have reached Britain by this time, and will shew, that the present powers of the Commissioners or least those we are obliged to suppose them to possess, are wholly incompetent to any valuable end.

I have appointed General Arnold to command in Philadelphia, as the state of his wound will not permit his services in a more active line. Colo. Jackson<sup>54</sup> with a Detachment of Troops is to attend him, and I flatter myself, that order will be preserved and the several purposes answered, expressed by Congress in their Resolution of the 4th. Instant.<sup>55</sup> The General set out this Evening, and I myself shall move with the main body of the Army at 5 in the morning to morrow. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

P.S. By this conveyance you will be pleased to receive the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry respecting the losses of the Forts in the Highlands.<sup>57</sup>

54. Henry Jackson, of one of the 16 Additional Continental regiments. His regiment was designated the Sixteenth Massachusetts Regiment in July, 1780. He was transferred to the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment in January, 1783.

55. The resolve of June 4, 1778, directed Washington to prevent public or private injury being done in Philadelphia after the British evacuated the city and to prevent the removal, transfer, or sale of goods or property belonging to the King or to British subjects.

56. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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57. The proceedings of this court of inquiry are not found in either the *Washington Papers* or the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

4 O'Clock P.M., June 20, 1778.

Sir: I have the Honor to inform you, that I am now advanced with the main body of the Army within Ten Miles of Coryel's ferry, and shall halt to refresh the Troops, and for the night, [as the weather is very rainy]. Genl. Lee with the six Brigades mentioned in my former Letter, will reach the Ferry this Evening. My last accounts from Jersey were from Genl. Dickinson, dated Yesterday at 3 o'Clock P.M. These say, the Enemy had then advanced to Eyres Town, three miles below Mount Holly, and were busily engaged in repairing the Bridge which had been destroyed. Genl. Dickinson adds, that there had been a brisk firing for some minutes between the Enemy and Maxwell's Brigade or a part of it in their advance; in which the former, according to the report of a Deserter had several killed. He further says, the Militia had been alarmed of their approach, were in good spirits and that he expected to day to be tolerably strong. I have this minute written to him by Express, requesting him to acquaint me with their and his own situation, what number of Men he had already collected, and what further augmentations he expects to receive. I have the Honor, etc.<sup>79</sup>

79. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The phrase in brackets was inserted by Washington in the draft and has the following deleted at the end: "The Afternoon promises to be very rainy, which will rather be inconvenient, as our Baggage is not yet on the ground for encamping." The letter was read in Congress June 23.

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

10 Miles from Coryels, June 21, 1778.<sup>80</sup>

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Sir: This will be delivered you by Major Wemp,<sup>81</sup> who has the care of some Warriors from the Seneca Nation. The inclosed copy<sup>82</sup> of a Letter from our Commissioners will shew, that they are come to obtain the release of Astiarix Another Warrior, who has been taken on the Frontiers of Virginia. I never heard of the circumstance, till I was informed of it a few days ago by a Letter from General Schuyler. As the Commissioners have consented to his exchange and advised it, I have assured them it was agreeable to me, and I must take the liberty to request that Congress will order it to be accomplished, as soon as possible. I have treated them with civility, but declared at the same time, in answer to their speeches, both in Council and as Warriors, if they do not immediately cease Hostilities and become our friends or at least neutral, that the moment we are clear of the British Army, I will turn our whole force against them and the other Nations, at War with us, [who had taken up the Hatchet against us and committed the most horrid barbarities,] and cut them off to a man. They saw the main body of our Army to day, which circumstance, added to the evacuation of Philadelphia and the presents I wrote to Genl. Arnold to make them, and the other instances of kindness,

80. "1778, June 21. To cash paid John Fell for Breakfast dinner and Supr. £ 6"—  
"Headquarters Account Book," in the *Washington Papers*.

81. Maj. Myndert Wemple, of Schenectady, N.Y.

82. This copy, dated June 9, 1778, is filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

I trust, will have a happy influence on the actions and disposition of their nation, when they return. They are also attended by a few of our Oneida and Tuscarora friends, who were thought necessary to proceed with the truce. They have dispatches from their sachems for the immediate return of such of their Men and Warriors as were here on account of their apprehensions of Hostilities by the Senecas &c. I consented to the measure and directed that they should be furnished with ample and suitable presents, if they could be obtained



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previous their departure. The Army is in march which will not permit me to add further than that I have the Honor etc.<sup>83</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, near Coryel's, June 22, 1778.

Sir: I have the Honor to inform you, that I am now in Jersey and that the Troops are passing the River at Coryel's and are mostly over. The latest intelligence I have had respecting the Enemy, was yesterday from General Dickinson. He says that they were in the morning at Mores Town<sup>98</sup> and Mount Holly, but that he had not been able to learn what rout they would pursue

<sup>83</sup>. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

<sup>98</sup>. Moore's Town.

from thence; nor was it easy to determine, as from their then situation, they might either proceed to South Amboy or by way of Brunswick. We have been a good deal impeded in our march by rainy weather. As soon as we have cleaned the Arms and can get matters in train, we propose moving towards Princetown, in order to avail ourselves of any favourable occasions that may present themselves of attacking or annoying the Enmey. I have the Honor etc.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup>. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Camp near Coryels, June 22, 1778.

Gentn.: I was honoured yesterday with the Board's Letter of the 19th. Inst.

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From the apprehensions of the Public, of an Indian war in the western department, and the earnest applications of General McIntosh for Troops, I was induced the 15th of the month to detach Durkee's and Ransom's companies<sup>1</sup> for that command. I am told by Lieut. Buck<sup>2</sup> that they are halted at Lancaster. As they are detached from this Army, Congress will be pleased to order their service, wherever they think it will be the most material; Nor have I any thing to offer against Lieut. Colo.

1. Capt. Robert Durkee, of one of the Wyoming Independent companies. He retired June 23, 1778, and his company was consolidated with that of Capt. Samuel Ransom's Wyoming company. Both Durkee and Ransom were killed in the Wyoming Valley Massacre, July 3, 1778.

2. Lieut. Asahel Buck, of Durkee's Wyoming Independent Company. He was killed by Indians in February, 1779.

Zebulon Butler's<sup>3</sup> remaining where he is and taking the direction of the Troops to be employed in that Quarter, if it is agreeable to Congress.

I inclose you the papers the Board were pleased to transmit me. As to the return of the Companies, I cannot conveniently get at it in the moving state of the Army. I have directed Lt. Buck to procure it at Lancaster. I have the Honor etc.<sup>4</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

English Town, 6 Miles from Monmouth,<sup>39</sup> ½ after 11 A.M., June 28, 1778.

Sir: I was duly honored with your favor of 20th Inst. with the report to which it referred, and trust my situation will apologize for my not answering it before.

I am now here with the main body of the Army and pressing hard to come up with the Enemy. They encamped yesterday at Monmouth Court House, having almost the whole

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of their front, particularly their left wing, secured by a marsh and thick wood and their rear by a difficult defile, from whence they moved very early this morning. Our advance, from the rainy weather and the intense heat, when it was fair (tho' these may have been equally disadvantageous to them) has been greatly delayed. Several of our men have fallen sick from these causes, and a few unfortunately have fainted

3. Of the Third Connecticut Regiment. He is recorded as colonel of the Second Connecticut Regiment by this date; was transferred to the Fourth Connecticut Regiment in January, 1781, and to the First Connecticut Regiment in January, 1783; served to June, 1783.

4. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

39. The draft adds "Court House" after Monmouth

and died in a little time after. We have a select and strong detachment more forward under the general Command of Major Genl. Lee, with orders to attack their rear, if possible. Whether the detachment will be able to come up with it, is a matter of question, especially before they get into strong grounds. Besides this, Morgan with his Corps and some bodies of Militia are on their flanks. I cannot determine yet, at what place they intend to embark. Some think they will push for Sandy Hook, whilst other suppose they mean to go to Shoal Harbour. The latter opinion seems to be founded in the greatest probability, as, from intelligence, Several Vessels and Craft are lying off that place. We have made a few prisoners, and they have lost a good many men by desertion. I cannot ascertain their number, as they came in to our advanced parties and pushed immediately into the Country. I think five or Six Hundred is the least number that have come in, in the whole. They are chiefly foreigners. I have the honour, etc.<sup>40</sup>

## TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Fields near Monmouth Court House, June 29, 1778.

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Sir: I have the honor to inform you that about seven OClock

40. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

yesterday Morning both Armies advanced on each other. About 12 they met on the Grounds near Monmouth Court House, when an action commenced. We forced the Enemy from the Field and encamped on the Ground. They took a strong post in our front, secured on both flanks by Morasses and thick Woods, where they remained 'till about 12 at Night, and then retreated. I cannot at this time go into a detail of Matters. When opportunity will permit I shall take the liberty of transmitting Congress a more particular account of the proceedings of the day. I have the honor, etc.<sup>41</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

English Town, July 1, 1778.

Sir: I embrace the first moment of leisure, to give Congress a more full and particular account of the movements of the Army under my command, since its passing the Delaware, than the situation of our Affairs would heretofore permit.

I had the honor to advise them, that on the appearance of the enemy's intention to march thro' Jersey becoming serious, I had detached General Maxwells Brigade, in conjunction with the Militia of that State, to interrupt and impede their

41. In the writing of Tench Tilghman.

progress, by every obstruction in their power; so as to give time to the Army under my command to come up with them, and take advantage of any favorable circumstances that might present themselves. The Army having proceeded to Coryell's ferry and crossed the Delaware at that place, I immediately sent off Colo. Morgan with a select Corps of 600 Men to reinforce General Maxwell, and marched with the main Body towards Princetown.

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The slow advance of the Enemy had greatly the air of design, and led me, with others, to suspect that General Clinton desirous of a general Action was endeavouring to draw us down, into the lower Country, in order by a rapid movement to gain our Right, and take possession of the strong Grounds above us.<sup>56</sup> This consideration, and to give the troops time to repose and refresh themselves from the fatigues they had experienced from rainy and excessive hot Weather, determined me to halt at Hopewell Township, about five Miles from Princetown, where we remained till the Morning of the 25th. On the proceeding day I made a second detachment of 1500 chosen troops under Brigadier Genl. Scott, to reinforce those already in the vicinity of the Enemy, the more effectually to annoy and delay their march. The next day the Army moved to Kingston, and having received intelligence that the Enemy were prosecuting their Rout towards Monmouth Court House, I dispatched [a third detachment of] a thousand select Men, under Brigadier General Wayne, and sent the Marquis de la Fayette to take the command of the whole advanced Corps, including Maxwells

Brigade and Morgans light Infantry; with orders to take the first fair opportunity of attacking the Enemy's Rear. In the evening of the same day, the whole Army marched from Kingston where our Baggage was left, with intention to preserve a proper distance for supporting the advanced Corps, and arrived at Cranberry early the next morning. The intense heat of the Weather, and a heavy storm unluckily coming on made it impossible to resume our march that day without great inconvenience and injury to the troops. Our advanced Corps, being differently circumstanced, moved from the position it had held the night before, and took post in the evening on the Monmouth Road, about five Miles from the Enemy's Rear; in expectation of attacking them the next morning on their march. The main Body having remained at Cranberry, the advanced Corps was found to be too remote, and too far upon the Right to be supported either in case of an attack upon, or from the Enemy, which induced me to send orders to the Marquis to file off by his left towards English Town, which he accordingly executed early in the Morning of the 27th.

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The Enemy, in Marching from Allen Town had changed their disposition and placed their best troops in the Rear, consisting of all the Grenadiers, Light Infantry, and Chasseurs of the line. This alteration made it necessary to increase the number of our advanced Corps; in consequence of which I detached Major General Lee with two Brigades to join the Marquis at English Town, on whom of course the command of the whole devolved, amounting to about five thousand Men. The main Body marched the same

56. Clinton's slow progress was due to the necessity of protecting his huge baggage train.

day and encamped within three Miles of that place. Morgans Corps was left hovering on the Enemy's right flank and the Jersey Militia, amounting at this time to about 7 or 800 Men under General Dickinson on their left.

The Enemy were now encamped in a strong position, with their right extending about a Mile and a half beyond the Court House, in the parting of the Roads leading to Shrewsbury and Middletown, and their left along the Road from Allen Town to Monmouth, about three miles on this side the Court House. Their Right flank lay on the skirt of a small-wood, while their left was secured by a very thick one, and a Morass running towards their rear, and their whole front covered by a wood, and for a considerable extent towards the left with a Morass. In this situation they halted till the morning of the 28th.

Matters being thus situated, and having had the best information, that if the Enemy were once arrived at the Heights of Middletown, ten or twelve Miles from where they were, it would be impossible to attempt any thing against them with a prospect of success I determined to attack their Rear the moment they should get in motion from their present Ground. I communicated my intention to General Lee, and ordered him to make his disposition for the attack, and to keep his Troops constantly lying upon their Arms, to be in readiness at the shortest notice. This was done with respect to the Troops under my immediate command.

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About five in the Morning General Dickinson sent an Express, informing that the Front of the Enemy had began their march, I instantly put the Army in motion, and sent orders by one of my Aids to General Lee to move on and attack them, unless there should be very powerful Reason's to the contrary; acquainting him at the same time, that I was marching to support him and for doing it with the greater expedition and convenience, should make the men disincumber themselves of their packs and Blankets.

After marching about five Miles, to my great surprise and mortification, I met the whole advanced Corps retreating, and, as I was told, by General Lee's orders, without having made any opposition, except one fire given by a party under the command of Colo. Butler,<sup>57</sup> on their being charged by the Enemy's Cavalry, who were repulsed. I proceeded immediately to the Rear of the Corps, which I found closely pressed by the Enemy, and gave directions for forming part of the retreating troops, who by the brave and spirited conduct of the Officers, and aided by some pieces of well served Artillery, checked the Enemy's advance, and gave time to make a disposition of the left wing and second line of the Army upon an eminence, and in a wood a little in the Rear covered by a morass in front. On this were placed some Batteries of Cannon by Lord Stirling who commanded the left Wing, which played upon the Enemy with great effect, and seconded by parties of Infantry detached to oppose them, effectually put a stop to their advance.

57. Col. Richard Butler, of the Ninth Pennsylvania Regiment He transferred to the Fifth Pennsylvania Regiment in January, 1781, and to the Third Pennsylvania Regiment in January, 1783: major general United States levies in 1791: killed in action with Indians in November, 1791, near Fort Recovery, Ohio.

General Lee being detached with the advanced Corps, the command of the Right Wing, for the occasion, was given to General Greene. For the expedition of the march, and to counteract any attempt to turn our Right, I had ordered him to file off by the new Church two miles from English Town, and fall into the Monmouth Road, a small distance in the Rear of the Court House, while the rest of the Column moved directly on towards the

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Court House. On intelligence of the Retreat, he marched up and took a very advantageous position on the Right.

The Enemy by this time, finding themselves warmly opposed in front made an attempt to turn our left Flank; but they were bravely repulsed and driven back by detached parties of Infantry. They also made a movement to our Right, with as little success, General Greene having advanced a Body of Troops with Artillery to a commanding piece of Ground, which not only disappointed their design of turning our Right, but severely infiladed those in front of the left Wing. In addition to this, General Wayne advanced with a Body of Troops and kept up so severe and well directed a fire that the Enemy were soon compelled to retire behind the defile where the first stand in the beginning of the Action had been made.

In this situation, the Enemy had both their Flanks secured by thick Woods and Morasses, while their front could only be approached thro a narrow pass. I resolved nevertheless to attack them, and for that purpose ordered

General Poor with his own and the Carolina Brigade, to move round upon their Right, and General Woodford upon their left, and the Artillery to gall them in front: [The Troops advanced with great spirit to execute their orders] But the impediments in their way prevented their getting within reach before it was dark. They remained upon the Ground, they had been directed to occupy, during the Night, with intention to begin the attack early the next morning, and the Army continued lying upon their Arms in the Field of Action, to be in readiness to support them. In the meantime the Enemy were employed in removing their wounded, and about 12 OClock at Night marched away in such silence, that tho' General Poor lay extremely near them, they effected their Retreat without his Knowledge. They carried off all their wounded except four Officers and about Fifty privates whose wounds were too dangerous to permit their removal.<sup>58</sup>

The extreme heat of the Weather, the fatigue of the Men from their march thro' a deep, sandy Country almost entirely destitute of Water, and the distance the Enemy had gained



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by marching in the Night, made a pursuit impracticable and fruitless. It would have answered no valuable purpose, and would have been fatal to numbers of our Men, several of whom died the preceeding day with Heat.

Were I to conclude my account of this day's transactions without expressing my obligations to the Officers of the Army in general, I should do injustice to their merit, and

58. Lodge's *Works of Hamilton* prints Hamilton's letter of July 5, 1778, to Elias Boudinot (vol. 9, 140): "I never saw the General to so much advantage. His coolness and firmness were admirable. He instantly took measures for checking the enemy's advance, and giving time to the army, which was very near, to form and make a proper disposition. He then rode back and had the troops formed on a very advantageous piece of ground ...America owes a great deal to General Washington for this day's work. A general rout, dismay and disgrace would have attended the whole army in any other hands but his, By his own good sense and fortitude, he turned the fate of the day. Other officers have great merit in performing their parts well; but he directed the whole with the skill of a master workman. He did not hug himself at a distance, and leave an Arnold to win laurels for him; but by his own presence he brought order out of confusion, animated his troops, and led them to success."

violence to my own feelings. They seemed to vie with each other in manifesting their Zeal and Bravery. The Catalogue of those who distinguished themselves is too long to admit of particularising individuals; I cannot however forbear mentioning Brigadier General Wayne whose good conduct and bravery thro' the whole action deserves particular commendation.

The Behaviour of the troops in general, after they recovered from the first surprise occasioned by the Retreat of the advanced Corps, was such as could not be surpassed.

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All the Artillery both Officers and Men that were engaged, distinguished themselves in a remarkable manner.

Inclosed Congress will be pleased to receive a Return of the killed, wounded and missing.<sup>59</sup> Among the first were Lieut. Colo. Bunner<sup>60</sup> of Penna. and Major Dickinson<sup>61</sup> of Virginia, both Officers of distinguished merit and much to be regretted. The Enemys slain left on the Field and buried by us, according to the Return of the persons assigned to that duty were four Officers and Two hundred and forty five privates. In the former number was the Honble. Colo Monckton.<sup>62</sup> Exclusive of these they buried some themselves, as there were several new Graves[on and] near the field of Battle. How many Men they may have had wounded cannot be determined; but from the usual proportion to the slain, the number must have been considerable There were a few prisoners taken. [Nor can the amount of the Prisoners

59. This return, in the writing of Tench Tilghman, is filed with Washington's letter in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*.

60. Lieut. Col. Rudolph Bunner, of the Third Pennsylvania Regiment.

61. Maj. Edmund B. Dickinson, of the First Virginia Regiment.

62. Hon. Robert Monckton, colonel of the Seventeenth Foot, British Army.

taken be ascertained, as they were sent off in small parties, as they were captured, and the returns not yet made.]

The peculiar Situation of General Lee at this time requires that I should say nothing of his Conduct. He is now in arrest. The Charges against him, with such Sentence as the Court Martial may decree in his Case, shall be transmitted for the approbation or disapprobation of Congress as soon as it shall have passed.

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Being fully convinced by the Gentlemen of this Country that the Enemy cannot be hurt or injured in their embarkation at Sandy Hook the place to which they are going, and being unwilling to get too far removed from the North River, I put the Troops in motion early this morning and shall proceed that way, leaving the Jersey Brigade, Morgan's Corps and other light parties (the Militia being all dismissed) to hover about them, countenance desertion and to prevent their depredations, as far as possible. After they embark the former will take post in the Neighbourhood of Elizabeth Town. The latter rejoin the Corps from which they were detached. I have the Honor etc.<sup>63</sup>

63. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. The portions within brackets are in the draft, which is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison, but not in the letter sent.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, July 7, 1778.

Sir: I have the Honor to inform you, that on Sunday morning the left wing of the Army moved towards the North River. The right followed yesterday; and the second line which forms the rear division, is also now in motion. I shall advance, as fast as I can, consistently with the circumstances of the weather and the health of the Troops.

The Enemy, from the advices of our parties of observation, were nearly if not all embarked yesterday. They have continued to desert upon all occasions.

I should be extremely happy, if the Committee appointed to arrange the Army, would repair to it, as soon as possible<sup>2</sup> Congress can form no adequate idea of the discontents prevailing, on account of the unsettled state of rank, and the uncertainty in which Officers are, as to their future situation. The variety of hands, in which the power of granting Commissions and filling up vacancies is lodged, and other circumstances have occasioned frequent instances of younger Officers commanding their seniors, from the former having

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received their Commissions and the latter not; and these not only in the line of the Army, but in their own Brigades and even in their own Regiments. This it will be readily conceived

2. This committee consisted of Joseph Reed and Francis Dana and had been appointed June 4, 1775, to assist Washington to arrange the army. In consequence of this letter Congress ordered (July 9): "That the committee appointed to arrange the army, repair without delay, to General Washington's head quarters and proceed on the business committed to them."

is necessarily productive of much confusion, altercation and complaint and requires the speediest remedy. I have the Honor, etc.

P.S. By accounts from Monmouth more of the Enemy's dead have been found. It is said the number buried by us and the Inhabitants exceeds three Hundred.<sup>3</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp at Pyramus, July 12, 1778.

Sir: On friday evening I had the honour to receive your Letter of the 7th Inst. with its inclosures.

The vote of approbation and thanks, which Congress have been pleased to honour me with, gives me the highest satisfaction, and, at the same time demands a return of my sincerest acknowledgements.<sup>24</sup> The other resolution, I communicated with great pleasure, to the Army at large in yesterdays orders.

The left wing of the Army, which advanced yesterday four miles beyond this, moved this morning on the route towards King's ferry. The right and the second line, which makes the last division are now here, where they will halt for

3. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

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24. On July 7, 1778, Congress "Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of Congress be given to General Washington for the activity with which he marched from the camp at Valley Forge, in pursuit of the enemy; for his distinguished exertions in forming the order of battle; and for his great good conduct in leading on the attack and gaining the important victory of Monmouth over the British grand army, under the command of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton, in their march from Philadelphia to New York."

a day or two or perhaps longer, if no circumstances of a pressing nature cast up, in order to refresh themselves from the great fatigues they have suffered from the intense heat of the weather.

We have had it reported for two or three days, thro' several channels from New York, that there is a french fleet on the Coast; and it is added, that the Enemy have been manning with the utmost dispatch several of their Ships of war which were there, and have pushed them out to sea. How far these facts are true, I cannot determine, but I should think it of infinite importance to ascertain the first if possible, by sending out swift sailing Cruisers.<sup>25</sup> The most interesting advantages might follow the information. I will try by every practicable means, that I can devise, to obtain an accurate account of the Enemy's fleet at New York. I have the Honor etc.<sup>26</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp, Paramus, July 14, 1778.

Sir: I had the honor yesterday evening of receiving your very important favour of the 10th. Instant.

25. Conrad Alexandre Gérard de Rayneval, French Minister to the United States, arrived in Philadelphia on July 12 on a vessel from D'Estaing's fleet at the Delaware Capes. He was officially received by Congress on August 6. On July 11 Congress resolved "That

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General Washington be informed by Mr. President, that it is the desire of Congress that he co-operate with his excellency Count D'Estaing, commander of a French squadron now on the coast of North America, and proceeding to New York, in the execution of such offensive operations against the enemy as they shall mutually approve." In the letter (July 11), transmitting this resolve, Laurens wrote: "Congress have directed me to propose for your Excellency's consideration an attack by Vice Admiral Count d'Estaing upon the British ships of War and Transports in the Harbour of Rhode Island, by which possession of a safe port may be gained, and the retreat of the British forces in that Island be cut off, as an alternative to a hazardous or ineligible attempt upon the British squadron within Sandy Hook."(See *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 13, v. 2, fol. 28.)

26. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

Colonel Laurens, one of my aids, will set out this morning with a letter to the French Admiral the Count d'Estaing inclosing a copy of yours, and such other information as I have been able to collect. Its further purpose is for the establishing a convention of signals in case of co-operation; or to convey him such a knowledge of the enemy's naval force and position, as may from time to time come under our cognizance.

It appears by intelligence of to-day that the Count d'Estaing is off or near Sandy Hook, having already seized several fishing boats on the banks, in order to procure information and pilots.

The Army is in motion and will cross the North River with all convenient dispatch, where I shall pursue such measures as may appear best calculated for improving the present conjuncture. I have the honor etc.<sup>39</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Camp near White Plains, July 22, 1778.

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Sir: Since I had the honor of addressing you

39. In the writing of James McHenry.

on the 14th, I have been favoured with your Letters of the 11th<sup>2</sup> and 17th with their respective inclosures.

The next morning after the receipt of the former, which came to hand on the 17th, I dispatched Lt. Colo. Hamilton another of my Aides [ (with the best Pilots, and the most skilful Masters of Ships I could procure)]<sup>3</sup> to Admiral Count D'Estaing, to converse with him more fully on the subject of his operations than I was able to direct Lt. Colo Laurens to do, for want of the information which afterwards I obtained from Major Chonin, and a knowledge in several other points besides. On Sunday night Mr. Laurens returned, and I found by him, that it was the Count's first wish to enter at Sandy hook in order to possess himself of, or to destroy, if possible, the whole of the British fleet, lying in the Bay of New York; and that for this purpose he had been much engaged in his inquiries about the depth of water, and in sounding the channel to ascertain it. The result of which was, that the water from the experiments made was too shallow at the entrance to admit his large Ships, or if they could be got in, it appeared that it would not be without a great deal of difficulty and risk. After this disappointment, the next important object, which seemed to present itself was an attempt against Rhode Island, which the Count inclined to make, unless I should advise the contrary, as soon as the Chimere frigate which had carried His Excellency Monsieur Girard, into the Delaware, should rejoin him. Lt. Colo. Hamilton, who was well informed of our situation, and of my sentiments

2. This letter contains this interesting P.S.: "Sometime ago I informed Your Excellency that Congress had adopted the Stile of 'North America' to these States This day that Resolution was reconsidered and reduced to the former mode of 'America'." This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

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3. This phrase within the brackets was inserted by Washington in the draft. His capitalization is here followed.

on every point, was instructed to give the Admiral a full and accurate state of facts, and to acquaint him, what aid and how far we could co-operate with him in case of an attempt, either against New York or Rhode Island; and also to obtain his ideas of the plan and system, which, he might think, ought to be pursued and to agree with him on certain Signals.

Previous to my dispatching Mr. Hamilton, from the information I received on my inquiries respecting the navigation at the Hook, I was led to suspect, however interesting and desirable the destruction or capture of the British fleet might be, that it was not sufficient to introduce the Count's Ships. Under this apprehension I wrote General Sullivan on the 17th by Express, that an Expedition might take place in a short time against Rhode Island, and urged him at the same time to apply to the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, for as many men as would augment his force to Five thousand, and also to make every possible preparation of boats, provision, pilots &c, as if the event was fixed and certain.

From this time till about Twelve O'Clock on Sunday the Troops continued passing the River, when I crossed with the last division. On Monday afternoon I arrived at this place, in the neighbourhood of which the right and left wing encamped that night, with the second line a few miles in their rear. And here I am happy to add, that their passage across the river was effected without any accident, or without any more delay than necessarily attended the work.

Being persuaded now from the conversation which I had, with several pilots and Masters of Vessels of character, as well as from the accounts of other Gentlemen and Colo. Laurens's report on his return, that the passing of the Counts Ships by the Hook would be extremely precarious, if not impracticable, I determined yesterday, which was as



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soon as it could be done, without waiting for further intelligence upon the subject, to put Two Brigades under marching orders. They accordingly marched this morning, at Two O'Clock for Rhode Island, under the particular command of Generals Varnum and Glover respectively, and both under the general direction, for the present, of the Marquis de la Fayette. A Water conveyance was thought of, and wished for the case of the Troops; but on consideration of all circumstances, such as the difficulty of providing vessels, the change and precariousness of the winds, The risk from the Enemy's Ships &c, their rout by land was deemed by far the more eligible. The force with General Sullivan from the best and latest advice I have been able to obtain, is about Three thousand. A detachment under Colo. Jackson will follow Varnum's and Glovers brigades.

The inclosed papers No. 1, respecting Eight persons sent from Bennington and ordered into the Enemy's lines came to hand yesterday.<sup>4</sup> About the same time, I received a Letter from Governor Clinton, containing a petition by the prisoners and a Letter from the Committee of Albany; all remonstrating against the proceeding. As this is a matter, in which I have no authority

4. These inclosures are not found. (See Washington's letters to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates and to Gov. George Clinton, July 21, 1778, *ante*.)

to act, nor in which I would wish to intermeddle, I take the liberty of referring it to Congress, that they may decide upon it.<sup>5</sup> The prisoners are at West point and ordered to be detained there for the present.

I would also take the liberty of transmitting to Congress a Letter from Capt. Gibbs,<sup>6</sup> and of recommending him to their consideration. His Letter was to have been sent by the Baron Steuben, before we marched from Valley forge, but his declining to go to York town, at that time, and our move thro' the Jersey's sey's delayed its being done. The Captain has been in the Army from the commencement of the war, and in the capacities, he mentions. When Congress were pleased to honor me with the appointment of Officers

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for the Sixteen additional Batallions, I offered to make some provision for him, but this he declined; preferring to remain in my family. The Guard he originally commanded, consisted of Fifty men, but since the arrival of Baron Steuben, it has been augmented to a hundred and fifty. The Baron advised that there should be a select corps of this number, to receive the manœuvres in the first instance and to act as a model to the Army; and proposed that it should be formed of the old guard company and drafts from the line. I presume if it should be Congress's pleasure, a majority would be highly agreeable to the Captain, and that it is as much as he expects.

1 O'Clock P.M.

I this minute received a Letter from Colo. Hamilton, who is on his return to the Army, dated the 20th at Black point. He informs that the Count D'Estaing would sail the next

5. These eight prisoners were inhabitants of New York, who were accused as loyalist suspects and duly sentenced to be sent within the British lines by the Vermont commissioners, whose duty it was to examine suspicious characters. Sent by these commissioners to General Stark at Albany. The Albany committee demanded the release of the prisoners, which injected the question of New York State's sovereignty over the New Hampshire Grants (Vermont) into the matter. Stark, a New Hampshire man, refused to release the men, who thereupon petitioned Governor Clinton themselves. Stark forestalled Clinton's action by sending the prisoners to General Gates. This in turn brought Washington into the dispute and he properly referred the matter to the Continental Congress. Washington's letter was read in Congress on July 27, which "Ordered, That the papers relating to the eight persons sent from Bennington, lie on the table for future consideration."

6. Capt. Caleb Gibbs. His letter is not found either in the *Washington Papers* or the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. This letter was read in Congress on July 27, and so much of it as respects Captain Gibbs was referred to the Board of War.

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Evening for Rhode Island, being convinced from actual soundings that he could not enter his Ships. He was anxiously waiting the arrival of the Chimere, but at all events meant to sail at the time he mentions. The Admiral has agreed on Signals with Mr. Hamilton. Immediately after this Letter came to hand, my Aid Mr. Laurens set out for Providence, having many things to communicate to General Sullivan upon the subject of his co-operation, which neither time nor propriety would suffer me to commit to paper. Genl. Sullivan is directed not to confine the number of his Troops to Five thousand, but to augment it, if he shall judge it necessary to ensure his success.

I was informed by Mr. Laurens that the Count D'Estaing's magazine of bread is not so large as we could wish, and that in the course of a few weeks he will be in want. This circumstance I thought it right to mention, and I should suppose that any quantity of Biscuit may be provided in a little time at Philadelphia.

The inclosures No. 2, are Copies of three Letters from myself to the Admiral.<sup>7</sup> I flatter myself the present of stock, which I directed for him, on his first arrival, in behalf of the States will be approved by Congress.

The accounts from the Western frontiers of Tryon County are distressing. The spirit of the Savages seems to be roused, and they appear determined on mischief and havoc, in every Quarter. By a letter from Governor Clinton of the 21st, they have destroyed

7. Washington's letters to Comte d'Estaing of July 14, 15, and 17, 1778, *q. v.*

Springfield and Andreas Town, and are marching towards the settlements on the West branch of the Delaware. Their incursions are extremely embarrassing to our other affairs, and, I think, will justify a conclusion that Sir Henry Clinton's intention was to operate up the North River. Whether it may have changed with circumstances, cannot be determined. I have detached the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment and the remains of Morgans corps under Lt. Colo Butler, and also Colo. Graham<sup>8</sup> with a York State regiment, to co-operate with the

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Militia and to check the Indians if possible, Colo Butler is an enterprising good Officer, and well acquainted with the savage mode of warfare; and I am persuaded whatever comes within the compass of his force and abilities will be done. I have the Honor etc.<sup>9</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, July 22, 1778.

Sir: Baron d'Arendt Colonel of the German Batallion who will have the honour of delivering you this, waits on Congress to make application for leave to retire from the service. the reasons he urges to me, are irreconcilable disputes between him and his officers, which make it impossible for him to join his regiment, and

8. Col. Morris Graham, of a New York Militia regiment.

9. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison; the draft is in that of Harrison and James McHenry.

the great uncertainty of his being elsewhere employed in a military line. As he requests that this letter may be a certificate to Congress of his past conduct, and assures me that he does not mean to use it as a foundation for soliciting a higher command. I very readily assure them that as far as his conduct has come under my cognizance and his infirm health has permitted him to act, it has ever been that of an intelligent experienced officer. I have the honor etc.<sup>10</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, July 26, 1778.

Sir: The Baron de Steuben will have the honor of delivering you this. I am extremely sorry, that this Gentleman's situation and views seem to have determined him to quit the service, in which he has been heretofore and is capable of still being extremely useful. Some

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discontents which arose among the Officers on account of the powers with which the office was at first vested, induced me to arrange the duties of it upon a plan, different from that in which it began. The moving state of the Army has for some time past, in a great degree, suspended the exercise of the Inspectorate.

10. The draft, in the writing of John Laurens, is signed by Washington.

When the Troops marched from Brunswic, the scarcity of General Officers, most of them being engaged with the Court Martial, either as Members or Witnesses, occasioned my giving the Baron a temporary command of a Division, during the March. On our arrival near our present incampment, I intended he should relinquish this charge and resume his former Office, for which purpose a General Order was accordingly issued. But I find that he is intirely disinclined to the measure, and resolves not to continue in the Service unless he can hold an actual command in the line. Justice, concurring with inclination, constrains me to testify, that the Baron has in every instance discharged the several trusts reposed in him with great Zeal and Ability, so as to give him the fullest title to my esteem, as a brave indefatigable, judicious and experienced Officer. I regret there should be a necessity his Services should be lost to the Army: At the same time I think it my duty explicitly to observe to Congress, that his desire of having an actual and permanent command in the line cannot be complied with, without wounding the feelings of a number of Officers, whose rank and merits give them every claim to attention, and that the doing it would be productive of much dissatisfaction and extensive ill consequences. This does not proceed from any personal objections on the part of those Officers against the Baron: on the contrary, most of them whom I have heard speak of him, express a high sense of his military worth. It proceeds from motives of another nature, which are too obvious to need particular explanation, or may

be summed up in this, that they conceive such a step would be injurious to their essential rights, and just expectations. That this would be their way of thinking upon the subject I am fully convinced, from the effect which the temporary command given him, even under

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circumstances so peculiar as those I have mentioned, produced. The strongest symptoms of discontent appeared upon the occasion. I have the honour etc.<sup>39</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, White Plains, July 28, 1778.

Sir: This will be presented to Congress by Genl. Putnam. He arrived from Connecticut the day after I came into the Neighbourhood of this Camp. As I have not received any Resolution of Congress, respecting the Court of Inquiry, which they directed and which was transmitted them, on the subject of the posts in the Highlands, taken last year, I am at a loss in what point of view to consider him. He wishes some decision in this instance, and his journey to Philadelphia is for the purpose.

39. In the writing of Tench Tilghman. This letter was read in Congress on August 1 and referred to Joseph Reed, Elias Boudinot, and Samuel Chase. They brought in a report (August 20) which established an Inspector General's Department, which was ordered referred to Washington for his opinion. (See Washington's letter to the President of Congress, Sept. 12, 1778, *post.*) On August 28 Congress requested Steuben to repair to Rhode Island to assist Sullivan.

I have the honor, etc.<sup>57</sup>

### To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 3, 1778.

Sir: I do myself the honor of transmitting to Congress a copy of a Letter from General Knox, and of sundry observations and remarks on the Ordnance establishment of the 11th of Feby, which I received about the time we marched from Valley Forge. These would have been transmitted before, had it not been for the moving state of the Army and a variety of other Objects which engrossed my attention. We have found by experience,

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that some inconveniences have resulted from this Establishment, which I conceive, have proceeded principally from the total independence of the Commissary General of Military stores, on the Commanding Officer of Artillery. It seems some alterations are necessary and what they shall be, Congress will be pleased to determine.

It is not without reluctance that I am constrained, to renew my importunities on the subject of the Committee of Arrangement. The present unsettled state of the Army is productive of so much dissatisfaction and confusion

57. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

and of such a variety of disputes, that almost the whole of my time is now employed in finding temporary and inadequate expedients to quiet the minds of the Officers and keep business on a tolerable sort of footing. Not an hour passes without New applications and New complaints about rank and for want of a proper adjustment of this and many other essential points, our Affairs are in a most irksome and injurious train. We can scarcely form a Court Martial, or parade a Detachment in any instance, without a warm discussion on the subject of precedence and there are several Good Officers now who are forced to decline duty, to prevent disputes and their being commanded by Others, who upon every principle are their Inferiors; unless their having obtained Commissions before them, from the opportunities they had of making earlier applications from local circumstances, should be considered sufficient to give them a superior claim. There are many other causes of dissatisfaction on this head, but I will not enter into a minute relation of them. I sincerely wish, that the Gentlemen appointed or such Others as Congress may think proper to nominate for the occasion, would immediately repair to Camp. The present opportunity is favourable for reducing matters to System and order, and from painful experience I know, there is an absolute necessity for it.

I should also hope, that Congress will excuse me for mentioning again the necessity there is for appointing

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some Brigadiers. The Massachusetts, by the resignation of General Learned, wants one. Pennsylvania as General Hand is not here, has but one with the Army. Maryland, which has Two large Brigades in the field, has only General Smallwood and the North Carolina Troops, since the departure of Genl. McIntosh, have been without any. As I had taken the liberty upon a former occasion to offer my sentiments to Congress and their Committee upon this subject, I should not trouble them now, if I was not more and more convinced that the service requires promotions in this line. The frequent changes which take place among the Officers, where there are no Brigadiers, are attended with great inconvenience and detriment; and they are an effectual bar to the introduction of discipline. In such cases, the Officers know, that their command is but temporary, always liable to cease and therefore they do not find themselves sufficiently interested to promote order and subordination; nor will the rest look up to them with that respect and deference which are essential. Every day's experience proves this, and shews beyond question, that the Affairs of a Brigade can never be in a right train without a Brigadier, or some General to direct them. It is certain, these appointments, at the first view will add a little to the list of expence, but in the end they will be a great saving and produce many important advantages. We are also a good deal distressed at this time for Major Generals; however, as this arises more from the peculiar circumstances and situation of many, which prevent them from duty in the line, than from a deficiency in the number appointed, I shall not add upon the occasion.

There is another branch of the Army, which in my opinion calls loudly for the appointment of a General

Officer and this is the Cavalry. For want of a proper regulating Head in this Corps, the whole has been in confusion, and of but very little service; whereas, under a right management, it might be most useful. The principal Officers in it do not harmonise, which circumstance with their disputes about rank would, were there no other Objections, effectually prevent the Corps from rendering the Public the services they have a right



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to expect, and of which it should be capable. To promote any gentleman now in it, to general Command, would not be acquiesced in by the rest (nor do I know that any of them wish it) and it would increase their misunderstanding and of course disorder. I mean to draw all the Horse immediately together, when I trust they will be under the direction of a General Officer appointed by Congress for the purpose. Who he shall be, will remain solely with them to determine. However, I will take the liberty to add, that he should be intelligent, active, attentive; and as far as I can judge, General Cadwallader or General Reed would fill the post with great honor and advantage; tho' it would seem, from the seat the latter has taken in Congress and from his late appointment to the Council of Pensylvania, as if he had declined every military view. The abilities of these Gentlemen, as well as their attachment are generally known, and I am led to believe that either would be as acceptable to the Corps, as any person that can be found; [indeed I have learnt as much from two of the Colonels.]<sup>7</sup>

I have been waiting with the most impatient

7. The phrase within the brackets was added in the draft by Washington.

anxiety to hear of Count D'Estaing's arrival at Rhode Island, but as yet I have not been so happy. My last intelligence from thence is a Letter from Genl. Sullivan dated at 10 O'Clock in the forenoon of the 27th when he had no advice of the Fleet. He was in high spirits and from the preparations in which matters were, he entertained the most flattering hopes of success in the intended Enterprise. The Brigades of Varnum and Glover, with Jackson's detachment would arrive, I expect on the 2d Inst.

As the Army was encamped and there was no great prospect of a sudden removal, I judged it advisable to send Genl. Greene to the Eastward on Wednesday last; being fully persuaded his services, as well in the Quartermaster line as in the field, would be of material importance in the expedition against the Enemy in that Quarter. He is intimately acquainted with the whole of that Country, and besides he has an extensive interest and

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influence in it. And in justice to General Greene, I take occasion to observe, that the public is much indebted to him for his judicious management and active exertions in his present department. When he entered upon it, he found it in a most confused, distracted and destitute state. This by his conduct and industry has undergone a very happy change, and such as enabled us, with great facility, to make a sudden move with the whole Army and baggage from Valley forge in pursuit of the Enemy and to perform a march to this place. In a word he has given the most general satisfaction and his affairs carry much the face of method and System.

I also consider it as an act of justice, to speak of the conduct of Colo. Wadsworth, Commissary General. He has been indefatigable in his exertions to provide for the Army and since his appointment, our supplies of provision have been good and ample.

August 4th.

At 7 O'Clock in the Evening yesterday, I received the inclosed Letter from Genl Sullivan, with one addressed to myself, a Copy of which I do myself the pleasure of forwarding. I am exceedingly happy in the Count's arrival, and that things wear so pleasing an aspect.

There is another subject, on which I must take the liberty of addressing Congress, which is that of the Cloathier's department. I am perfectly satisfied, that unless this very important and interesting Office is put under better regulations and under a different Head, than it now is, the Army will never be cloathed. Mr. Mease is by no means fit for the business. It is a work of immense difficulty to get him to Camp upon any occasion, and no order can retain him there sufficiently long, either to answer the demands of the Troops, or to acquire more than a very slight and imperfect knowledge of them. This is of itself according to my ideas, would make him highly culpable; but there are other circumstances. He is charged with inactivity, in not pursuing the best and all the means that present themselves, to provide Cloathing. His Agents too, who have been with the Army from inability or a want of industry, or proper instructions from their principal,

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have been very incompetent to the purposes of their appointment. Besides these objections, Mr. Mease unhappily is represented to be of a very unaccommodating cast of temper, and his general deportment towards the Officers who have had to transact business with him, has rendered him exceedingly obnoxious. The constant and daily complaints against him, make it my indispensable duty to mention these points, and it is the more so, as I believe both Officers and Men, particularly the latter, have suffered greater inconveniences and distresses, than Soldiers ever did before for want of Cloathing; and that this has not flowed more from a real scarcity of Articles, than a want of proper exertions and provident management to procure them. It is essential that something should be done and immediately, to place the department on a better footing. We have now a great many men intirely destitute of Shirts and Breeches and I suppose not less than a fourth or fifth of the whole here, who are without Shoes. From the deficiencies in this line numbers of desertions have proceeded, not to mention deaths, and what is still worse, the Troops which remain and see themselves in rags want that spirit and pride necessary to constitute the Soldier.

I have been informed by Several Officers and by such as I can depend on, that many of the late Draughts are willing and desirous of enlisting during the War. I do not conceive myself at liberty to give directions on the point and therefore submit it to Congress to decide. However, if they can be engaged

for the usual bounties allowed by the Continent, after proper precautions are taken to prevent fraud, I think the measure will be expedient. It is true, our Affairs have an agreeable aspect at present, but the War may continue and we want men. A third of the time of some of them, and a half in the case of others, is already expired; and as they will rise in their views and become more difficult in proportion as their service draws to a conclusion, if the step is considered adviseable, the sooner we attempt to inlist the better in all probability will the work succeed. I have the Honor etc.<sup>8</sup>

**To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 3, 1778.

Gentlemen: I had the honor of receiving your favour of the 27th Ult<sup>o</sup>. on the 1st instant, inclosing sundry resolves of Congress and other papers respecting two expeditions meditated into the Indian Country one from the Southward and the other from the Northward. I have [since the receipt of them] it, been endeavouring to collect the necessary information concerning the means already provided, or to be provided towards prosecuting the latter; and I sincerely

8. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

wish our prospects were more agreeable to the views of Congress than they are; but after examining the matter in every point of light I am sorry to say, an enterprise of this nature at the present time under our present circumstances appears to me liable to obstacles not easily to be surmounted.

On receiving your Letter I wrote to General Gates, copies of mine to him and of his answer to me<sup>87</sup> are inclosed. I do not find that any preparations have been made for the intended expedition; If the project should be continued almost every thing is still to be done. The Board will perceive that General Gates imagined it was laid aside.

Governor Clinton happening to be in Camp, I took occasion to consult him and General Gates jointly on the affair. They both concurred fully in opinion, that a serious attempt to penetrate the Seneca settlements at this advanced season [and under present circumstances] appearances was by no means adviseable; would be attended with many certain difficulties and inconveniences, and must be of precarious success. The reasons for this opinion are in my judgment conclusive.

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Supposing the enemy's force is fifteen or Sixteen hundred men according to the estimate made by the Board [and much larger by their accts.], (other accounts make it larger) to carry the war into the interior parts of their country, with that probability of succeeding, which would justify the undertaking, would require not less than three thousand Men. And if the attempt is made it ought to be made with

87. See Washington's letter to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, Aug. 2, 1778, ante. Gates's answer is not found in the *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress.

such a force as will in a manner insure the event; for a failure could not but have the most pernicious tendency. From inquiries I have made, not more than about twelve hundred militia from the frontier counties could be seasonably engaged for a sufficient length of time to answer the purpose of the expedition; little or no assistance can be looked for from the people of the Grants,<sup>88</sup> who are said to be under great alarm for their own security, which they think is every moment in danger of being disturbed by way of Coos. The deficiency must be made up in Continental troops; and as there are only four or five hundred already in that quarter, who might be made use of on the occasion, the residue must go immediately from this army. The making so considerable a detachment at this time, is I conceive a measure that could not be hazarded, without doing essential injury to our affairs here.

Of this the Board will be fully sensible, when they are informed, that the enemy's strength at New York and its dependencies is at a moderate computation 14,000 men, our strength on the present ground less than [under] 13,000. Besides this number, only a bare sufficiency has been left in the Highlands to garrison the forts there. We have been lately reduced by a large detachment to Rhode Island, and it is possible a further detachment may become necessary. Should we weaken ourselves still more by an enterprise against the Indians, we leave ourselves in some degree at the mercy of the enemy, and should either

### 88. The New Hampshire Grants, otherwise Vermont.

choice or necessity induce them to move against us, the consequences may be disagreeable. Though there is great reason to suppose the enemy may wish to withdraw their force from these states, if they can do it with safety; yet if they find their departure obstructed by a superior maritime force, it may become a matter of necessity to take the field, and endeavour at all hazards, to open a communication with the country in order to draw supplies from it and protract their ruin. This they will of course effect, if we have not an equal or superior army in the field to oppose them with. We should endeavour to keep ourselves so respectable as to be proof against contingencies.

The event of the Rhode Island expedition is still depending; if it should fail we shall probably lose a number of Men in the attempt. To renew it, if practicable, we should be obliged to send reinforcements from this army, which could very ill be spared with its present strength; but would be impossible, if it were diminished by a detachment for the Indian expedition. And then should the enemy unite their force, they would possess so decisive a superiority as might involve us in very embarrassing circumstances. If on the contrary we succeed at Rhode Island a variety of probable cases may be supposed with reference to European affairs, which may make it extremely interesting to the common cause, that we should have it in our power to operate with vigor against the enemy in this quarter; to do which, if it can be done at all, will at least require our whole force.

These considerations sufficiently evince, that we cannot detach from this army the force requisite for the expedition proposed, without material detriment to our affairs here. And comparing the importance of the objects here with the importance of the objects of that expedition, it can hardly be thought eligible to pursue the latter at the expence of the former. The depredations of the savages on our frontiers and the cruelties exercised on the defenceless inhabitants are certainly evils much to be deplored, and ought to be guarded against, as far as may be done consistent with proper attention to matters

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of higher moment; but they are evils of a partial nature which do not directly effect the general security, and consequently can only claim a secondary attention. It would be impolitic to weaken our operations here, or hazard the success of them to prevent temporary inconveniences elsewhere.

But there are other objections to the measure of almost equal weight. The season is too far advanced for the enterprise, to raise and collect the troops to lay up competent magazines, and to make needful preparations and then to march to the Seneca settlements and back again would exhaust at least five months from this time; and the rivers would be impracticable before it could be effected. This time will not be thought too long, if it is considered, that the preparations of every kind are yet to be begun; and that when completed an extent of more than three hundred miles, is to be

traversed through a country wild and unexplored, the greater part hostile and full of natural impediments. The rivers too at this time of the year are more shallow than at others, which would be an additional source of difficulty and delay. I shall say little on the subject of provision, though it is a serious question whether our resources are so far equal to our demands, that we can well spare so extensive supplies, as this expedition will consume. Besides feeding our own troops, we shall probably soon have to victual the French fleet which is said to have twelve thousand Men on board.

Notwithstanding the opinion I entertain of this matter, founded upon a knowledge of many circumstances which Congress could not be apprised of, in obedience to their orders, I shall without delay take measures for forming magazines at Albany [and upon the Mohawk River] and for preparing every thing else for the expedition, except calling out the Militia and shall be glad of the further directions of Congress, as speedily as possible. If it is their pleasure that it should still go on, I shall apply for an aid of Militia and can soon march the detachment of troops which must be sent from this Army.

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I shall take the liberty however to offer it as my opinion, that the plan for subduing the unfriendly Indians ought to be deferred till a moment of greater leisure. We have a prospect that the British army will ere long be necessitated either to abandon the possessions they now hold and quit

these states, or perhaps to do something still more disgraceful. If either these should arrive, the most effectual way to chastise the Indians and disarm them for future mischief, will be to make an expedition into Canada. By penetrating as far as Montreal, they fall, of course, destitute of supplies for continuing their hostilities, and of support to stimulate their enmity. [A measure of this sort would strike at the root, the other is only checking a few sprouts which will soon grow again]<sup>89</sup> This would strike at once at the root, the other would only lop off a few branches, which would soon spread out anew, nourished and sustained by the remaining trunk. Instead of the expedition resolved upon, it might be advisable to establish a well furnished Garrison of about three hundred continental troops<sup>90</sup> some where near the head of the Susquehannah, at Unadilla, or in the vicinity of that place. And at the same time to establish a good post at Wyoming, with some small intermediate post. These posts would be a great security to the frontiers; and would not only serve, as barriers against the irruptions of the savages, but with the occasional aid of the militia would be convenient for making little inroads upon their nearest settlements; and might facilitate a more serious enterprise, when it shall be judged expedient. I shall be glad of the sentiments of Congress on this proposition.<sup>91</sup>

89. This bracketed sentence is in the writing of Washington but was later stricken out.

90. The draft first estimated this garrison at 400 or 500.

91. The letter sent is missing from the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. The above text is from the draft in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The occasional words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.



**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

White Plains, August 7, 1778.

Sir: Yesterday afternoon I had the Honor to receive your favor of the 30th Ult.

Major Gibbs is now at Rhode Island. I shall embrace the first safe opportunity to transmit him your Letter and the Commission with which Congress have been pleased to honor him.

Since my Letter of the 3d and 4th Inst., I have received no advices from General Sullivan, so that I can give no information of our operations against the Enemy in the Eastern Quarter. I am told the Militia of Massachusetts and Connecticut were collecting fast, and proceeding to reinforce him.

I have the pleasure to acquaint Congress, that Major General Lincoln arrived here yesterday, and that he is happily so far recovered from his wound, as to be able to take his command in the line.

The inclosed paper from New York came to hand last night. It contains an account of the fire, which unfortunately broke out in the City on Sunday night and of the damage which was occasioned by it. It also contains the latest advices that I have seen from Britain and such as appear to be interesting.<sup>29</sup> I have the Honor &c.<sup>30</sup>

29. Comte D'Estaing wrote to Washington (August 3) of his arrival at Rhode Island, the burning of three British frigates there, and general preparations against the enemy's position. Lieut. Col. John Laurens wrote (August 4) a long letter from Providence, detailing the occurrences from July 25. Washington forwarded copies of these two letters (August 7) to the President of Congress in a brief inclosing note.

30. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

White Plains, August 9, 1778.

Sir: At 10 O'Clock last night the Inclosed Letter came to hand from General Sullivan with one addressed to my self, a Copy of which I do myself the honor of transmitting. The Enemy seem determined that none of their Ships of War shall fall into the Count D'Estaing's hands....<sup>64</sup>

64. The omitted paragraph is practically the same as the second paragraph in Washington's letter to Lieut. Col. John Laurens, Aug. 8, 1778, *q. v.*

General Maxwell's information, respecting Lord Howe's sailing from the Hook was stated in such pointed and positive terms, that I thought it my duty to communicate it to Count D'Estaing and accordingly I dispatched an Express with it, in a very little time after I was advised on the subject, subjoining a Copy of his Nota Bene. I have the Honor etc.<sup>65</sup>

**To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

[Head Quarters, White Plains, August 9, 1778.]

Sir: Mr. Fuhrer<sup>66</sup> and Mr. Kleinsmith<sup>67</sup> have lately left the British lines and come into us. The account they give of themselves is this. That they had been first lieutenants in the Hessian Corps, were taken prisoners at Trenton, resided during their captivity at Dumfries in Virginia, were lately exchanged and have since resigned their commission. That having solicited permission to come

65. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

66. Ensign Carl Friedrich Fuhrer, of Knyphausen's regiment, Hessian allied troops, British Army.

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67. Ensign Carl Wilhelm Kleinschmidt, of Rahl's regiment, of which he acted as adjutant. 'Von Kraft's *Journal*, printed in the New York Historical Society's Collections, 1882, states that the portraits of these two officers were affixed to a gallows as deserters by the British in New York on Oct. 1, 1781.

out from the enemy and being refused, they determined to leave them at all hazards, and have now put their design in execution. The circumstances of their captivity are known to several officers in our army.

They are desirous of entering into our service, observing that there are a number of German Officers in the same disposition with themselves, who will resign and join us, if they find that these meet with proper countenance. It appears to me, that important advantages may attend the encouraging a disposition of this nature, if it really exists, which is far from impossible, from the influence it will necessarily have on the soldiery, by increasing that spirit of desertion and discontent, which already prevails among them. Congress will best judge of the propriety of employing these Gentlemen. I have been thinking in what manner it might be done; and the mode least exceptionable, which at present occurs to me, is to authorise them to raise a corps for themselves, by inlisting such German inhabitants, and such of the prisoners and deserters from the foreign troops, as may be willing to engage. The Corps at first as it is only by way of experiment need not be large; but may be afterwards increased, as circumstances shall point out. This measure, I apprehend, cannot be attended with any material inconvenience and may be productive of utility. If the Gentlemen are employed at all it must be in a New Corps, as they could not be introduced into any of those already formed, without injuring the Officers in them and producing dissatisfaction, murmurs and resignation's.

I have sounded them on the plan here suggested and they seem to be very sanguine in its success and anxious to undertake it. They expect some augmentation of rank and indeed it seems necessary in order the more effectually to interest others to follow their example;

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but caution should be used not to carry the idea too far, because besides other weighty objections, the higher the rank conferred on them, the more difficult it will be to provide for those, who may hereafter come to us, and who will of course frame their expectations by comparison. I have the honor etc.

P.S. An additional grade to the rank they held in the corps they come from will in my opinion be sufficient.<sup>68</sup>

### To RICHARD HENRY LEE

White Plains, August 9, 1778.

Dear Sir: A few days ago I received your favor of the 26th. Ult<sup>o</sup>. inclosing one from Colo. Spotswood,<sup>69</sup> for which I thank you. The reputation which this Gentleman had acquired, of being an attentive Officer and good disciplinarian, was justly founded, and I considered his leaving the Army a loss to the service. The supposed death of his Brother, it is natural to believe, had a painful

<sup>68</sup>. In the writing of Henry P. Livingston. The draft, dated Aug. 9, 1778, is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton, and varies in unimportant details from this letter sent. The P.S. is in Hamilton's writing and is not in the draft. The letter sent is undated but is indorsed as received and read in Congress August 18 and referred to the Board of War.

<sup>69</sup>. Col. Alexander Spotswood, of the Second Virginia Regiment. He had resigned in October, 1777.

influence upon his mind; but he had long before been very uneasy in his situation, on account of the determination in the case between him and Colo. McClanachan<sup>70</sup> [and I am persuaded he was only prevented from quitting the line in consequence, thro' my means].<sup>71</sup> My regard for Colo. Spotswood and the opinion I entertain of him as an Officer, would induce me to interest myself in his favor, where ever I could with propriety. In the

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present instance however I cannot, because I think I should do an injury to the Officers of the Virginia line (if not to those of the line at large) and because I am convinced his promotion would excite infinite discontents and produce many resignations. When he left Camp in the Month of October, he made a surrender of his Commission to me, according to the then prevailing custom. This was accepted and a New arrangement took place among the Field Officers. After this, I could not suppose him to continue in the line, and to attempt to recall the rise of the Officers, to give him a place again, would be to attempt an impossibility. No reasoning upon the subject would be sufficient to get them to consent to it. With respect to the report of the Board of General Officers, to which you allude, you will excuse me when I say, in my opinion it will not apply. The case there was, that sundry inferior Officers or juniors of the same rank, from local circumstances and the opportunities of application obtained from the Committees or Councils of the States, in whom the power of appointing Officers to the Army for 1777 was vested, New commissions prior in date to those granted

70. Col. Alexander McClanachan, of the Seventh Virginia Regiment. He had resigned in May, 1778.

71. Brackets in original.

afterwards to their seniors, and in consequence claimed a right to rank before them. The Board determined their claims unjust and that the rank which the Officers immediately held before their new Commissions, should govern, as it did not appear that the Councils intended to supercede the Senior Officers; but here, there had been no interruption or relinquishment of the right to rank by resignation, surrender of commissions, or any other act of the parties. Nor could I ever think that Colo. Spotswood had cause to complain of the decision on the point in question, between him and Colo. McClanachan. It was founded on the practice, which had commonly prevailed, I believe universally, in like cases. Vizt. That when State Officers became Continental they should rank with respect to each other, according to their State precedence. This principle appeared to be just, and I

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am certain, was the only one that could be adopted to give general satisfaction. As many of our Regiments in the first instance, and particularly those from Virginia, were raised by the States without any order by Congress, a contrary rule would have involved great inconveniences and would have proved an effectual bar to many valuable Officers coming into service. I have not the most distant suspicion that Colo. Spotswood is influenced in his wishes, upon the president occasion, in the smallest degree by any considerations arising from the half-pay establishment. I am convinced that he is not; Nor do I believe that any Officer will impute a matter of the sort to him, or object to his being reintroduced into the line, from motives of personal dislike. They

will oppose it as an injury to their rights.

I thank you much for your Congratulations. The prospect we have before us is extremely pleasing, and such as promises a glorious and happy issue to all our Struggles. Success in the intended enterprise against Rhode Island would operate powerfully, I should suppose, upon the minds of the British Nation and to bring matters to a conclusion. [I wait impatiently to hear from thence.] I am, etc.<sup>72</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

White Plains, August 11, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty of transmitting to Congress the Inclosed Letter, which I just now received from the Pay Master General. They will perceive by it, that the Military Chest is intirely exhausted and that a third of the Army remains unpaid for the Months of April and May. The importance and necessity of an immediate and large supply will at once appear and I am persuaded it will be forwarded with all possible expedition.

Since I had the honour of writing by Colo. Heth<sup>83</sup> on Sunday last, I have not received any advices from Rhode Island. I have the Honor &c.<sup>84</sup>

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72. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The final sentence within the brackets is in the writing of Washington. This letter is printed in the *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee and His Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 2.2, under date of Aug. 10, 1778, and with a few verbal variations of small consequence.

83. Col. William Heth, of the Third Virginia Regiment. He was taken prisoner at Charleston, S.C., in May, 1780; prisoner on parole to close of the war.

84. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 13, 1778.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit you a letter from Major General Sullivan, which, from the tardiness of the expresses, is but just come to hand. I suppose it gives Congress the same information communicated to me; but lest there should be any particulars mentioned in his letter to me, which may not be contained in the one to you, I am induced to accompany the latter with a copy of the former.<sup>8</sup>

The papers sent from Congress to Head Quarters and returned, respecting the case of Major General St. Clair, will be wanted immediately, as it is probable his trial will now very speedily come on.

I beg you will excuse the trouble I give you, in requesting you will favour me in your next with copies of the resolve of Congress, for raising the regiment of Artillery in Virginia, and appointing Col. Harrison to the command of it, and of another passed the latter end of 76, for raising three battalions of Continental Artillery.<sup>9</sup> Some disputes about rank have arisen which makes these resolutions necessary; and it happens that my papers of that period are absent. With the utmost respect I have the honor etc.

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P.S. I request you will be pleased to forward the inclosed to Mr. Serjeant<sup>10</sup> without delay.<sup>11</sup>

8. A copy of Sullivan's letter to Washington of August 6, reporting the destruction of British frigates at Rhode Island and the slowness of the militia in assembling, is filed with Washington's letter, in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. The original is not found in the *Washington Papers*.

9. The resolves of Nov. 26 and 30 and Dec. 27, 1776. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

10. Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, attorney general of Pennsylvania. (See following letter.)

11. In the writing of Alexander Hamilton.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 16, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty, by the conveyance now offered me by Capt. Riley,<sup>34</sup> to transmit to Congress the proceedings of the Court Martial in the case of Major General Lee.<sup>35</sup>

The inclosed papers comprehend a request by General Phillips,<sup>36</sup> so for an Officer to go to Canada by way of the Lakes, on the subject of Cloathing for the Convention Troops. I do not conceive myself at liberty to answer General Heath upon the point, who referred it to me, and request that Congress will favor me with their direction as soon as they conveniently can, that I may enable him to satisfy Genl Phillips respecting it.

I have not received a single tittle of Intelligence from Rhode Island, since General Sullivan's Letter of the 10th, a Copy of which I transmitted in mine of the 13th. I am



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extremely anxious to hear from thence, and of Count D'Estaings safe arrival in port. The moment I do, I shall do myself the honor to advise Congress. I have the Honor etc.<sup>37</sup>

34. Capt, John Reiley(?), of the Third Pennsylvania Regiment. He had been wounded in 1777 and was transferred to the Invalid Regiment in 1780.

35. The original proceedings of the court-martial of Lee are missing. It was published by Congress, and copies of this publication exist. Later reprints are also readily available. In the *Washington Papers*, under the assigned date of August 12, is an extract in Washington's writing, which he made from the original record before forwarding it to Congress, of the charges and the judgment of the court.

36. Maj. Gen. William Phillips, British Army, commanding the Convention troops. His letter to Heath, dated July 29, 1778, is in the *Washington Papers*. Heath's letter to Washington, of August 6, is not found in the *Washington Papers*; but a contemporary extract of it is filed with the above letter from Washington to Congress.

37. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. It is indorsed: "Ordered That the sd. papers with so much of the letter as relates to the request" [of General Phillips] "be referred to Mr. [Samuel] Chase, Mr. [William] Duer and Mr. R. H. Lee."

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 16, 1778.

Sir: Since I had the honor of addressing you to day by Capt. Riley, I received a Letter from General Sullivan, a copy of which you have inclosed. From this it appears the Count D'Estaing had not returned with his Squadron on the 13th Inst. and there is reason to fear from the Violence of the Weather ever since, that he has not yet got in. This accident has much deranged our views, and I shall be happy if it does not totally defeat the Enterprise against Rhode Island. I feel much for the Count. He has been peculiarly unfortunate in

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the combination of several untoward circumstances to frustrate his plans. The Letter addressed to you accompanied mine from General Sullivan. They were both delivered at the same instant and through inadvertency, I broke the seal of yours. Before I had opened it I discovered the mistake, and the contents have not been seen. This relation I trust will apologize for the measure. I have the Honor, etc.

P.S. Your favor of the 13th has come to hand.<sup>38</sup>

38. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 19, 1778.

Sir: I do myself the honor to transmit you a Copy of a Letter from General Sullivan, dated the 17th Inst., which I just now received with the Letter Inclosed.<sup>48</sup> It appears that Count D'Estaing was still out with his fleet, but yet that the General was in high spirits and entertained the strongest hopes of success. I flatter myself they are well grounded, and that in the course of a few days he will announce the entire reduction of the Enemy's force on the Island.

The Declaration<sup>49</sup> respecting Governor Johnstone has been sent by a flag to the British Commissioners. I have the honor, etc.

P.S. I send three York papers.<sup>50</sup>

48. A copy of Sullivan's letter of August 17, by James McHenry, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 160, fol. 153. It informed Washington that though Comte D'Estaing had not been heard from since he sailed out to meet the British Fleet, Sullivan had moved forward to "within long shot of the enemy" to tempt them to make an attack; this was declined and Sullivan thereupon commenced intrenching.

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49. This "Declaration" was spread on the Journals of Congress on Aug. 11, 1778. It declared that Congress hold it incompatible with their honor in any manner to correspond or have intercourse with George Johnstone, Esq., one of the British Commissioners. This was forwarded to Washington in a letter from the President August 13.

50. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The P.S. is in the letter sent, but not in the draft, which is also by Harrison, and which has the following crossed out: "I could wish the earliest decision of Congress on the subject of reinlisting the Troops whose time of service will shortly expire. There are several in the Virginia line who have been long in the Army and who have but a little time to stay. I am informed by the Officers that most of these, as well as many of the Drafts can be reingaged, if the present opportunity is embraced."

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 21, 1778.

Sir: I do myself the honor of transmitting to Congress, the inclosed Memorial of Colo. Rawlings<sup>67</sup> presented in behalf of himself and the Maryland Officers, who were under his command in the year 1776. The facts which are stated in it, are generally true and I cannot but feel myself exceedingly interested in favor of these Gentlemen. The conduct of this whole Corps, when Fort

67. Col. Moses Rawlings, of one of the Additional Continental regiments, He had been lieutenant colonel of Stephenson's Rifle Regiment in 1776 when taken prisoner; resigned in June, 1779. His memorial is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 41, 8, 365.

Washington was attacked is so generally known and approved, that it is almost unnecessary to add upon the subject. However, I think it but justice to observe, that every representation of that day's transaction gave them the highest credit. They fought with a degree of veteran bravery and tho' but a handful, they maintained their ground a considerable time, notwithstanding the most vigorous efforts to force them. All who were

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spectators upon the occasion have declared this, and the Enemy themselves have not refused them applause. It seems hard that Officers of their merit should be overlooked, and a loss to the service, that they should remain unemployed. But the consequences that would attend their incorporation with any of the Corps now existing, appear too disagreeable to try the experiment. Colo. Rawlings himself from the information I have had, does not incline to give any uneasiness to the line of the Army, and would rather make a distant part of it against the Indians, in case he could be provided for in that way. Capt. Beale<sup>68</sup> who is charged with this, will be able to inform Congress more fully than I can, of the wishes of the Colonel and the rest of his Officers; and his account may lead perhaps to some suitable and practicable provision for them. As I have observed before they are men who deserve well of their Country. I only mention the Maryland Officers upon this occasion, because that part of the Corps which came from Virginia, was provided for by the state in their present arrangement, as I have been credibly advised.

68. Capt. William Dent Beall (?).

Mr. Rawlings was never in the compleate and actual command of the Regiment under his direction, as Colonel, because he never obtained a Commission; but he became entitled to it, according to the common rule of promotion, by the death of Colo. Stephenson<sup>69</sup> and the non-acceptance of Colo. Morgan<sup>70</sup> who was appointed to it. With the latter circumstance Mr. Rawlings I am persuaded was never apprised, as it was kept a secret from an apprehension that the Enemy might claim an Officer of the rank of Colo. in exchange for Morgan who was then a prisoner on parole, if his promotion came to their knowledge. Major Williams<sup>71</sup> of the Maryland part of the Corps, was appointed by the State to one of her regiments now in the field, and is the only Officer in his predicament I know of, that they arranged. I have the Honour, etc.<sup>72</sup>

## TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 24, 1778.

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Sir: I had yesterday the honor to receive your favor of the 20th Inst.

I take the liberty of transmitting you a Copy of a Letter, which this minute came to hand from Genl. Sullivan,

69. Col. Hugh Stephenson.

70. Col. Daniel Morgan.

71. Maj. Otho Holland Williams, of Stephenson's Rifle Regiment. He was taken prisoner at Fort Washington; exchanged and appointed colonel of the Sixth Maryland Regiment in December, 1776; transferred to the First Maryland Regiment in January, 1781; brigadier general, Continental Army, in May, 1782; retired in January, 1783.

72. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. It was read in Congress on August 25 and referred to the Board of War.

On August 21 Washington wrote also a brief note to Congress forwarding Sullivan's letter to that body of August 19 and a copy of Sullivan's letter to Washington of the same date. Both of these are in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 160, and Washington's note of August 21 is in No. 152.

advising of the Count D'Estaings arrival.<sup>83</sup> He omitted to inclose the Admirals Letter<sup>84</sup> to which he refers and therefore I can give no further intelligence than what the Copy contains. From the suffering of the fleet the Storm must have been exceedingly severe at Sea. I also inclose Two York papers of the 19th and 20th. These mention an engagement off Sandy Hook on the 16th. It could only have been partial on the side of the French Squadron at any rate, as the Languedoc and the Seventy four Gun Ship must have lost their Masts before that time. It would seem by the account given in the papers, that the Iris and some other ships on the part of the Enemy had been damaged. I have the Honor, etc.<sup>85</sup>

## To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 25, 1778.

Sir: Inclosed you will be pleased to receive a Copy of a Letter of the 23d Inst. from General Sullivan, which came to hand about half after three O'Clock this morning, with the several papers to which it refers, Copies of which are also transmitted.<sup>94</sup> By these Congress will perceive, our prospects

83. Sullivan's letter, dated August 21, is not found in the *Washington Papers*, but a copy of it, by James McHenry, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 160. It reported the damage done the French Fleet by the storm and encounter with the British and Comte D'Estaing's apparent purpose of going to Boston to refit. Sullivan sent Greene, Lafayette, and John Langdon to persuade him to remain in Rhode Island.

84. D'Estaing's letter to Sullivan (August 21) was sent by the latter to Washington in his letter of August 23. In it the admiral announced his departure for Boston and the impossibility of leaving troops to aid Sullivan. He explained that he was bound by his instructions from the King not to risk his fleet against a superior force which, after the storm and the engagement, the British then possessed. John Laurens, in a hurried letter to Washington (August 23), ascribed the comte's decision to go to Boston to the French council of war, composed, he said, of "the Cabal of Marine Officers who wish his destruction because he was introduced from the land Service into their Corps." Laurens thought the solemn protest of the American officers might afford the comte "a justification for his acting in direct contradiction to the unanimous voice of his officers," and induce him to remain at Rhode Island. Laurens's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

85. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

On August 24 Washington wrote to Col. William Malcom concerning the construction of Capt. John Stevens's machine. There was a difference of opinion as to its probable

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success and if Malcom could not spare the workmen, Washington directed that the experiment be laid aside temporarily. This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

Also on August 24 Washington wrote briefly to Lieut. Col. William Butler, of the Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment, congratulating him on his small frontier successes at Schoharie, N.Y., and stating that he had requested General Stark, commanding at Albany, "not to send any Officer of superior Rank to interfere with you in command, as I have great reliance upon your activity and skill in conducting such an expedition as that which you are now upon." This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

94. These inclosures were copies of Sullivan's two letters to Washington of August 23, Greene's protest to D'Estaing of August 21, D'Estaing's letter to Sullivan of August 21, and the protest of all the American officers to D'Estaing against his leaving Rhode Island for Boston of August 22. This last was signed by Sullivan, Greene, and Brig. Gen. John Glover; Maj. Gert. John Hancock, of the Massachusetts Militia, and the following brigadier generals of militia: Ezekiel Cornell, Rhode Island; William Whipple, New Hampshire; John Tyler, Connecticut; Solomon Lovell, Massachusetts; and Jonathan Titcomb, Massachusetts. Originals or copies of all of these are also in the *Washington Papers*.

are much changed with respect to the operations against Rhode Island, and that the issue, as things are now circumstanced, whether we look to a continuation of the seige, to an immediate attack or a Retreat, must be attended with great difficulty and risk. I trust the wisest measures will be pursued and I will hope for the best. With the greatest respect and esteem I have the Honor, etc.

P.S. General Sullivan I think, must be under a mistake, as to the amount of the relief, which the Enemy had attempted to give from New York.<sup>95</sup> I have used every possible means to obtain information from time to time on this head, and I never could learn, either from Deserters or from others who had been in the City, that any Troops had embarked

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since the reinforcement sent up the sound long ago, except some drafts to act in the fleet as Marines.<sup>96</sup>

### **To THE BOARD OF WAR**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 28, 1778.

Gentlemen: Your favor of the 14th Inst. has been duly received. The object which the Board have in view, is desireable, and I wish

95. Sullivan stated that Howe's fleet had 4,000 troops on board.

96. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on August 28.

it may be accomplished; however I cannot entertain a hope that accurate returns can be obtained here of the Officers who have served in the Army from the beginning of 1777 to the present time, and I am certain it will be impossible to ascertain the dates of their Commissions. The States never transmitted me lists of their appointments, and the perpetual changes which have taken place from death, resignations, the confusion of rank &c &c have put it out of my power to procure a competent knowledge of them. I believe the Board will not be able to form a Register with any regularity, but from the arrangement now in contemplation; Nevertheless the Colonels and Officers commanding Corps will use, I am persuaded, their best endeavours to make the Returns requested by them, having received orders for the purpose. I have the honour etc.<sup>11</sup>

### **To THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS**

Head Quarters, White Plains, August 31, 1778.



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Sir: I would take the liberty to inform Congress, that Colo. Armand is come to camp with his Corps and has applied to me for commissions for his Officers. By the Resolution for establishing the Corps, it was to be officered out of the Foreigners then

11. The draft is in the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison.

commissioned in our service, who were not, nor could be provided for in any of the Regiments. Instead of this, there are only three Officers in his Corps, who before held any Commissions in our service Viz: Lieut. Colo. Vrigny<sup>31</sup> and Captains Mercley and Shafner.<sup>32</sup> The Two last were only Lieutenants and are now appointed to Captaincies, contrary, it seems to me, to the spirit and intention of the Resolution.<sup>33</sup> As Colo. Armand has departed from his instructions which must govern me, I am not authorised to grant the Commissions he requires, and am therefore under the necessity of troubling Congress, with the arrangement of the Corps, No. 1,<sup>34</sup> as it now actually stands for their consideration and decision. The Colonel founds his deviation from the Resolve upon some verbal intimation given him, that the part in question would not be insisted on.

I would also take the liberty to mention, that General Du Portail lately delivered me a Memorial,<sup>35</sup> in which among other things he represents that he had made an agreement with Congress, at his first appointment, that neither himself nor the other Gentlemen with him, should ever be commanded by any of the Engineers who had preceded them in our Army. I could not but answer, that the Commissions of Officers were the only rule of precedence and command I had to judge by; and while others held superior appointments, I must consider them accordingly in the course of service. He gave me the inclosed Letter to you upon the subject and is extremely anxious to have the matter placed upon a certain footing; and no doubt it will be for the good and

31. Resigned in October, 1778.

32. Cpts. Charles Markit and George Shaftnet. Both had been in Pulaski's Legion.

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33. The resolve of June 25, 1778. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*.)

34. This arrangement (inclosure No. 1), in Armand's writing, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 152, 6, 383. It is indorsed by Charles Thomson: "Arrangement of Armand's Corps made by the sd. Armand wch. Genl. Washington cannot confirm. referred to the board War."

35. This inclosure, which should have been numbered 2, is dated August 27 and is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 41, 8, 54.

tranquility of the service that the claim be determined as speedily as possible one way or the other. At the same time I think it right to observe, that it cannot be expected that Colo. Cosciusko,<sup>36</sup> who has been a good while in this line and conducted himself with reputation and satisfaction will consent to act in a subordinate capacity to any of the French Gentlemen, except General Portail.

The frequent condemnations to capital punishment, for want of some intermediate one between that and a Hundred lashes (the next highest under our present military articles) and the necessity of frequent pardons in consequence, induced me a few days ago, to lay the matter before a Board of Officers for them to consider, whether some mode might not be devised of equal or greater efficacy for preventing crimes and punishing Delinquents when they had happened, less shocking to humanity and more advantageous to the States, than that of Capital execution. The inclosed paper No. 3,<sup>37</sup> contains the opinion of the Board upon the subject, which with all deference I submit to the consideration of Congress and doubt not but they will adopt the expedient suggested, if it shall appear in anywise calculated to promote the service. I will only observe before I conclude upon this occasion, that when I call the Board to consult upon the point, there were Eleven prisoners under sentence of death, and probably many more for trial, in the different guards on charges that would effect their lives.

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Since I had the honor of writing you on the 25th Inst.

36. Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko.

37. This was a copy of the proceedings of the Council of General Officers, Aug. 20, 1778, *ante*.

I have not received a single line from General Sullivan. The only intelligence I have from the Eastward is from Monsr. Pontjebeau.<sup>38</sup> This Gentleman left Rhode Island the 27th inst. and arrived about Two Hours ago in Camp. From him I learn that that our people were still on the Island. That it was generally thought they had made effectual provision for a retreat in case of exigency. That in the evening of that day he met Monsr. Preville,<sup>39</sup> an Officer belonging to the Languedoc, at Providence, going with dispatches to Genl. Sullivan, who informed him that the French fleet had got into Boston. He further adds, that Monsr. Colonne,<sup>40</sup> who was in company with him at Providence and who had more conversation with Mr. Preville than he himself had, told him, that M. Preville said Count D'Estaing had sailed or was on the point of sailing again for Rhode Island with 10 Ships of the line and his Frigates. I have the Honor etc.

P.S. Your favor of the 20th only came to hand just now.<sup>41</sup>

### To JAMES LOVELL

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, March 29, 1778.

Sir: I have been favoured with yours of the 24th and 26th instant. The latter by M. de Francy,<sup>87</sup> who delivered me the several things mentioned in M. Penet's letter. You have my thanks for your care in forwarding them. Several accounts corroborate the

38. Pontgibaud, Comte de Moré, Chevalier de, aide to Lafayette.

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39. Chevalier de Preville is given in *Combattants Français de la Guerre Americane* as an ensign on Le Zélé, D'Estaing's fleet.

40. Capt. Louis St. Ange, Chevalier de la Colombe. He was aide to Lafayette.

41. In the writing of Robert Hanson Harrison. The letter was read in Congress on September 3 and referred to the Board of War.

87. Thévencau de Francy, agent for Caron de Beaumarchais, in America.

probability of the evacuation of Rhode Island, and a number of Men are embarked at New York. I have not the least doubt but they are meant to reinforce Genl. Howe, and have therefore wrote pressingly to all the States to forward their Recruits.

You may depend upon my paying Gray<sup>88</sup> his wages upon application. If he ever applied before, I refused to settle with him then, because he wanted the proper testimonials.

I think the admission of our Vessels to an entry in the Custom House of Martinique, and receiving the duty upon our Goods on Account of the Government, is a clear proof of the intention of France to encourage and protect our trade. The Warlike manner in which they now fit out their Merchantmen, also indicates a jealousy between the Courts of Versailles and London. I am etc.<sup>89</sup>

88. A messenger of Congress.

89. The draft is in the writing of Tench Tilghman.